

FIRESTARTER

Screenplay

by

Bill Phillips

Based on the Novel by

Stephen King

and Screenplay by

Bill Lancaster

**PROPERTY OF:
Universal Studios**

FIRESTARTER

BLACK SCREEN

The militant bass notes and drum rolls of the Jefferson Airplane's familiar WHITE RABBIT fill the SOUND TRACK. After a moment, SUPERIMPOSE:

FIRESTARTER

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Grace Slick's VOCAL comes in as WHITE RABBIT continues OVER. A 60's Festival of Love is in progress on this idyllic picture-postcard campus. SUPERIMPOSE:

1967
A SMALL COLLEGE,
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Shirtless long-haired Young Men in jeans press apple cider for the many Passersby. A Mime Troupe good-naturedly engages uninvolved Students and Faculty, some of whom join in the celebration. Flowers adorn the hair of many Women and some Men. Beads and sandals prevail; bras are noticeably absent. Natural baked goods are peddled. One Pied Piper sells highly decorative kaleidoscopes. Joints are passed discreetly, but freely. Mandolins and guitars are strummed. All this takes place on and around the steps of a charming, ivy-covered building, the letters ADMINISTRATION chiseled in stone over its large wooden portals.

Nearby, students sun or study on the College Green. Frisbees fly, arcing beautifully in the sun.

Beyond the green sits a more modern building. It has none of the charm of the traditional campus. A frisbee hovers before it, the word BIOLOGY visible before the frisbee drops.

ANDY MCGEE, 22, a lean and rather clean-cut college senior, bypasses all the festivity on his way to the biology department. His arms are laden with thick textbooks.

The tall and athletic GEORGE LARSON, 21, throws a frisbee too high for his pretty girlfriend, VICKY TOMLINSON, also 21. She makes a valiant leap, but it sails over her head, landing close enough to Andy to embarrass him into throwing it back. Intimidated, he tosses back a wobbler. Vicky must run twenty feet to pick it up. Andy shrugs his apology. Vicky smiles at him before skillfully tossing it back to George. Andy can't resist looking over his shoulder at this beautiful girl as he approaches the Biology Building. He takes one last lingering look before entering the sterile structure.

INT. BIOLOGY BUILDING - VARIOUS OFFICE CUBICLES - DAY

Two Biology Grad Students, 26, and 28, and one senior Biology Major, QUINCEY TREMONT, 22, assist a rather stern and professional woman scientist, DOCTOR HELEN RAHV, 35, in interviewing a succession of students. WHITE RABBIT continues and concludes.

QUINCEY

Belong to any political parties
or organizations?

BLOND MALE

Sierra Club. Mountain climbing.
I'm into climbing.

CUT...

GRAD ASSISTANT #1

Says here on your application...
both your parents are deceased?

CUT...

SPLITCHY BEARD

I really think he sold out going
electric. He just doesn't know
where he's at.

CUT...

VICKY TOMLINSON

No, I live alone.

CUT...

GIDDY FEMALE

... My favorites were... well, Leave
it to Beaver...

(giggles)

I had a crush on Eddie, what's it,
Haskell... Ah, Father Knows Best,
the old Lucy reruns... y'know,
stuff like that.

CUT...

MOUSTACHE

I'm not like a lot of the others.
I only chant when I really, really
need something.

CUT...

GRAD ASSISTANT #2

Have you ever been arrested?

CUT...

WHITE FEMALE FRIZZY HAIR
I'm majoring in Afro-American Studies...

CUT...

ANDY MCGEE
...Oh, Milton, Bacon... Mainly
Shakespeare... Who's funding this
thing, anyway?

DR. RAHV
The National Institute of Health.

CUT...

GRAD ASSISTANT #1
Do you have many friends?

CUT...

VICKY TOMLINSON
... None of these Buddhists have a
sense of humor...

CUT...

SIDHARTH. SPLOTCHY BEARD
Steppenwolf...

CUT...

QUINCEY
Ever taken any hallucinogenic drugs?

PONY TAIL MALE
Acid, mescaline, silicybin...

QUINCEY
How many times?

PONY TAIL MALE
Well... 115, 120 times.

Quincey writes "Reject" on Pony Tail's form.

CUT...

GRAD ASSISTANT #1
Do you have any medical problems?
Take medication? Birth control...?

VICKY TOMLINSON
I really don't think that's any
of your business.

CUT...

ANDY MCGEE
I applied 'cause I need the money.

CUT...

GIDDY FEMALE
'Cause I wanted to get high.

CUT...

DOCTOR RAHV
Have you ever undergone psychiatric care?

CUT...

BLOND MALE
Listening to music, mostly. Beatles, Stones, Cream... Beatles mainly. Sergeant Pepper blew my mind.

INT. ROOM 70 - BIOLOGY BUILDING - DAY

CAMERA FOLLOWS CLOSE on a medical tray. Ampules of liquid are stacked on top. PULL BACK to reveal QUINCEY walking toward the corner of a large room. It resembles a hospital ward more than a biology classroom. Primate skeletons, anatomy charts, embryos in jars are housed in glass display cases. Six students lie on hospital gurneys. Each is covered by a white sheet up to the neck. EKG monitors, EEG machines, a portable X-ray, and video cameras and recorders are placed around the room.

ANDY'S HAND grasps Quincey as he walks by.

QUINCEY
(with familiarity to Andy)
Careful.

ANDY
(in a whisper)
Quincey... c'm'ere.

Quincey looks around, leans closer to Andy.

ANDY (CONT'D)
(referring to next bed)
What's her name?

QUINCEY
Never mind. This is science, man.

They both glance to the next bed, where Vicky Tomlinson lies, unaware of the conversation. She is being fitted with monitoring equipment by a Graduate Assistant.

Andy grasps Quincey's arm with good-natured urgency.

ANDY
You got me into this. Least you
can do is tell me her name. I
think I'm in love.

QUINCEY
(amused, nervous)
Vicky. Now forget we were ever
roommates. I got work to do.

ANDY
(whispering)
Vicky what?

But Quincey leaves him. Andy looks over to Vicky, whose assistant is finishing hooking her up. After a moment, she looks his way, smiles nervously. Assistant brings monitoring equipment to Andy now. He gently manipulates Andy's head into a face-up position, robbing him of precious seconds of looking at Vicky. She is amused.

GRAD ASSISTANT (#1)
Okay, this isn't gonna hurt.

Andy grimaces.

LATER - DR. RAHV

She looks out over the room with satisfaction, anticipation. As she speaks, CAMERA picks up reactions of Assistants and Students, revealing a variety of responses.

DR. RAHV
All right. We're going to give
each of you an injection. It will
be practically painless...

Andy smiles to Vicky, who isn't smiling.

DR. RAHV (CONT'D)
... and totally harmless. Because
some of you will be receiving a
mild hallucinogenic substance, you
may perceive things... differently.

Splotchy Beard and Blond Male look delighted. White Frizzy Haired Girl looks scared. Giddy Female looks bewildered, but excited.

DR. RAHV
But you will be under our close
supervision and care for the next
forty-eight hours. And there's
nothing to worry about, I promise you.

Andy looks over at Vicky. She doesn't look totally convinced by Dr. Rahv. She catches Andy's gaze, immediately feels better.

VICKY

My girlfriend says they do these experiments all the time. She did one with those ESP cards. She got fifty dollars even though she missed almost all of them.

ANDY

I'm hoping it'll improve my Frisbee throwing.

Vicky smiles. She likes Andy.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON VICKY

She lies in her bed. Quincey slaps her arm, slips an I.V. catheter into her vein. She grimaces. He tapes the catheter secure.

CLOSE ON ANDY

Dr. Rahv inserts an I.V. into his arm. Andy looks up at her, trying not to wince.

ANDY

(to Rahv)

See you in forty-eight hours.

Rahv smiles at him.

EXT. BIOLOGY BUILDING - SUNSET

The sun is a glow behind the hills. Lights burn from within a row of windows in the Biology Building. Room 70. There is no more evidence of the Festival of Love on campus.

INT. ROOM 70 - SUNSET

The Splotchy Bearded Student weeps sadly, then breaks into softer tears of joy.

The White Frizzy Haired Girl is frozen into a dreamy smile.

Blond Male seems to be listening to music, deeply touched. We hear nothing.

Giddy Female is gritting her teeth. She seems to be feeling something sexual. She tries to restrain her MOANS.

Andy lies in his cot, feeling exalted and At One with the universe. He turns to face Vicky.

Vicky's tongue repeatedly traces the path around her mouth. Her lips glisten with saliva. She sees Andy's regal stare.

VICKY
(feeling a need to explain)
It's really wet. I can't help it.

ANDY
I don't blame you, Vicky.

She seems impressed that he knows her name.

VICKY
How did you know my name?
Did I tell you?

Andy doesn't remember how he knows her name.

ANDY
You were always Vicky. You will
always be Vicky. Forever.

Tears of joy come into her eyes.

VICKY
Yes... oh, yes. I know that.

ANDY
It's warm in here.

VICKY
And wet. It's too wet.

Vicky and Andy are covered in perspiration.

CAMERA REVEALS that the other subjects are getting warm, too. Even Dr. Rahv and the Assistants are sweating. Perspiration flows. Rahv whispers to Graduate Assistant #2, who turns on the Air Conditioners. A loud HUM fills the silence in the room as the cooling equipment goes to work. This continues throughout the experiment.

VICKY (CONT'D)
(getting cooler)
Thank you, Andy.

Andy doesn't know how she knows his name. Vicky doesn't either. He drifts off into unconsciousness.

ANDY
That's what I'm here... for...

CUT TO:

DR. RAHV

places a tray of dominoes in front of the Splotchy Bearded Student on a portable table. Quincey operates a small video camera just behind her.

DR. RAHV
Knock them down.

Splotchy Beard, matted with perspiration despite the air conditioning, looks very spaced as he weakly reaches for the line of dominoes. Dr. Rahv grabs his arm gently.

DR. RAHV (CONT'D)
No. Without touching them.

Splotchy Beard concentrates. A domino falls, starting the chain reaction, bringing them all down. Splotchy Beard looks pleased.

DR. RAHV (CONT'D)
Good.
(to Quincey)
Did you get that?

Quincey, stunned (for he is not under the influence of hallucinogens), nods silently. Rahv moves over to him.

DR. RAHV
Let's see what else we get.

EXT. BIOLOGY BUILDING - NIGHT

The windows of Room 70 glow amidst the darkness of the campus.

INT. ROOM 70 - NIGHT

Quincey, excited now, sets up his camera on Vicky. Rahv is there with the dominoes.

DR. RAHV
You can do it.

Vicky strains and strains. Nothing happens, but Vicky doesn't know that. She acts as though she is knocking them down.

VICKY
Oh, my God! How did I do that?
(to Andy)
Look, Andy!

Quincey and Rahv react to Vicky's delusions. Andy is preoccupied with his wrist.

CLOSE ON ANDY

His wrist is bothering him. A Graduate Assistant sits beside him.

ANDY

Hey...

The Assistant looks him directly in the eyes. At this moment, ALL SOUND EFFECTS become uncharacteristically BRILLIANT and CLEAR, a condition which gradually diminishes back to normal.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(unconsciously "pushing")
This thing hurts. Why don't you
take it off?

The Assistant doesn't flinch or even hesitate for a second.

ASSISTANT

Sure thing. Sorry about that.

He detaches Andy's monitoring device. An Audio Warning BEEP is emitted, drawing Rahv's attention to the incident.

ANDY

(to Assistant)
Thanks.

Rahv hurries over to Andy's cot.

RAHV

(to Assistant)
What the hell are you doing?

ASSISTANT

It was hurting his wrist. I just
thought I'd take it off.

Rahv looks at the Assistant in disbelief.

RAHV

Go take a break.

ASSISTANT

(displeased with Rahv)
Sure.

Rahv hooks Andy back up. He is beginning to suffer a terrible headache... the result of his "pushing" the dismissed Assistant.

RAHV

There. I'm sorry, but this must
remain connected.

Andy seems in terrible pain. Rahv is distracted by SCREAMING from across the room. Andy watches her hurry away.

ANDY
(to himself)
This is weird shit.

Andy is surprised at what he sees across the room.

POV ANDY - SPLOTCHY BEARDED STUDENT

Bright light is strobing through the windows of the room. A LOUD, METALLIC CLANGING is syncopated with the flickering windows. SCREAMING, HOWLING, A MAD CACKLING. Unreality... or is it real?

Lab assistants in their white coats crowd around the Bearded Student's gurney, obscuring him. A bloody hand rises up and out of the huddle of white jackets, its fingers streaked with tissue. The hand smashes into a nearby anatomy chart, leaving behind an imprint of a bloodstained COMMA. The chart RATTLES UP its roller with a STRIDENT SNAPPING SOUND.

ANDY - UNREALITY

He watches all this from a standing position beside his bed. He turns to Vicky. The light continues to strobe wildly.

ANDY
Did you see that?

Vicky is too preoccupied with her newfound "powers" to have seen anything else. The dominoes are still standing, but she seems to think otherwise.

VICKY
(delighted, to Andy)
Watch...!

Nothing happens, except that Vicky claps her hands joyfully as though she has just witnessed an extraordinary event.

VICKY (CONT'D)
How does it happen?

Andy is puzzled by her response, turns back toward the Splotchy Student. He is being wheeled out of the test room. The BLOND MALE is chanting in his own world, adjacent to the departing gurney.

BLOND MALE
Don't drop the beat. Don't drop
the beat.

Andy looks back to his own bed. He sees himself lying there, looking distressed.

REALITY

Rahv whispers something to Quincey, who approaches Andy with a hypodermic needle. Andy is in bed, confused. Quincey looks shaken.

QUINCEY

Okay, pal. Time to come down.

Quincey injects sedative into Andy's arm. Andy tries to protest before he slumps into unconsciousness.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Andy props himself up on a cot. He is alert, but slightly groggy. Quincey stands over him.

ANDY

What time is it?

QUINCEY

Forty-eight hours, pal. Congratulations. You earned your money. Feel okay?

ANDY

(nodding)

Anybody get hurt?

QUINCEY

Hurt?

ANDY

Like hurt themselves...

QUINCEY

(hiding something)

Ah, one guy had a seizure. He lied about his epilepsy.

ANDY

I saw a guy pull his eyes out.

Quincey manages a humoring smile.

QUINCEY

Strongest champagne you'll ever have. You should hear what some of the others saw.

ANDY

Where's Vicky?

QUINCEY

She's up and out. Left a couple hours ago.

ANDY
(disappointed)
Oh.

QUINCEY
We've got some follow-up questions.
Then I can give you your paycheck.

INT. HALLWAY BIOLOGY BUILDING - DAY

Andy leaves Quincey's office and walks past the incubators and refrigerators which clutter the hall. Despite his newly acquired paycheck, Andy seems disturbed.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Andy walks with the Blond Male from the experiment.

BLOND MALE
Come on, man, you gotta be putting
me on.

ANDY
No... didn't you see the kid across
from you all bloodied up?

BLOND MALE
Look, man, I was so stoned I thought
I was seeing the Beatles at Shea
Stadium. They were doin' Sergeant
Pepper live, man, and it sounded
just like the record.

INT./EXT. VICKY'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Vicky opens the door, immediately recognizes Andy, who holds a half-gallon bottle of Almaden Burgundy. Behind her, posters of Belmondo and D.H. Lawrence adorn the walls. The Doors' BREAK ON THROUGH plays on her stereo. She is pleasantly surprised, but a little on edge.

VICKY
Andy! How did you find me?

ANDY
Ve haff our vays. You like
cheap wine? I decided to blow
my paycheck.

VICKY
Come in.
(taking the wine)
You shouldn't have.

GEORGE'S VOICE (O.S.)

Yeah. Ya shouldn't have.

Large George appears from the next room, stands possessively behind Vicky. He looks hostile. Vicky tries to keep things civilized.

VICKY

(walking a tightrope)

Andy, this is George Larson.

George, meet Andy McGee.

Andy senses he is interrupting something. He nervously extends his hand for a handshake. George doesn't bother, causing Andy to have to finesse his aborted attempt into a rather silly looking hair pat. George keeps his eyes coldly locked on Andy.

GEORGE

You were in the experiment?

Andy nervously nods, abandoning speech. George looks sullen. Andy looks to Vicky for a rescue.

VICKY

George is on the football team.

ANDY

(sinking)

I thought I'd seen you somewhere.

GEORGE

I'm often over here. Maybe you saw me here.

ANDY

No, no.

(deciding to leave)

Well... I just wanted to drop off this wine, ah... I can't stay.

VICKY

Come on in. Let's at least have a glass of wine... a toast or something?

Andy looks at George, as if for permission. He gets none, but Vicky persists.

VICKY

(exiting to kitchen)

I'll get the glasses.

ANDY

No... that's all r...

But Vicky is gone, leaving Andy alone with large George. The glaring is palpable. There is a long moment of silence between the two men.

GEORGE

Can we talk?

ANDY

(voice cracking)

Sure.

GEORGE

(moving closer)

Whatever happened between you two in there is the product of drugs. So don't think you can come around here and interfere with my and Vicky's relationship.

Andy swallows, becoming afraid.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Is that clear?

Andy is afraid he might get hit. He tries to pacify the impassioned boyfriend.

ANDY

Ah, look...

Andy is at a loss for words, but he has achieved direct eye contact with George. ALL SOUND EFFECTS suddenly take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY, the effect diminishing as Andy's headache sets in.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I'm not looking for any trouble.
Uh, I'm a decent guy, y'know?
Why don't you just back off and leave me alone?

George listens to reason, immediately feels better about Andy.

GEORGE

Sorry. I didn't mean to come on strong. I know you're not looking for trouble. You're a decent guy. I'll just back off and leave you alone.

ANDY

(surprised, confused)

Thanks.

Andy is dismayed to see George simply open Vicky's door, as if to leave. Vicky returns with the wine glasses.

VICKY

George...?

George doesn't respond.

ANDY
(to George)
Aren't you going to say goodbye
to Vicky?

George casually turns, looks to Vicky, smiles.

GEORGE
Goodbye, Vicky.

She just looks at George with a mixture of confusion and impatience. Andy looks at Vicky as though to ask what a nice girl like her is doing with a bully like that. No words are exchanged. Only warm looks.

VICKY
He isn't always like that.

Andy wonders whether he had voiced his question aloud.

VICKY'S BEDROOM - LATER

The Doors' album is still playing. The last cut is on: LIGHT MY FIRE. A Stick of incense burns from Vicky's dresser. Andy sits alone on her bed. He doesn't look well. He looks around the room as we HEAR WATER POURING from the faucet in the adjacent bathroom. The light is bright in there. It hurts Andy's eyes as he looks to the partially opened door. The light is dim in the bedroom. He fixes his gaze on the stereo, listens to the music.

Vicky comes out of the bathroom with a glass of water and an aspirin bottle. She sits beside Andy, looks concerned for him.

VICKY
(offering the aspirin)
Here.
(pauses, watches him open
the bottle, take three)
Those are bad for your chromosomes,
y'know.

Andy looks to her plaintively, needs no words to communicate that he couldn't care less about his chromosomes at the moment. He takes the aspirin, downs half the water.

VICKY

Drink it all.

(self-conscious pause)

Better for your stomach.

Andy obeys, hands her the glass. She dispenses with it quickly, placing it on the floor. She brings her hands to Andy's temples, gently massages his head. He relaxes under the touch.

VICKY (CONT'D)

Think it was the wine?

ANDY

(trying to smile)

It wasn't that cheap.

She kisses his hair gently.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(liking it)

That's better.

He turns, tries to forget his pain, kisses Vicky fully on the mouth. It is an innocent kiss, but enough to allow exploration. They both like what they find.

VICKY

Can I say something without you getting the wrong idea?

ANDY

I think so.

VICKY

The way I feel about you...?

ANDY

(after a long silence)

Yeah?

VICKY

(hesitantly)

I've never wanted to give myself to anyone before.

Andy thinks he knows what she's talking about. He hopes so. He can't believe his luck, doesn't want to blow it by saying anything now. He just stares.

VICKY (CONT'D)

But I don't want to be selfish.

(pause)

I know you have a headache.

Andy's recovery qualifies for the medical journals.

ANDY
It's not that bad.

VICKY
No?

Andy shakes his head. He wants her very much. She shyly unbuttons the top button on her blouse. She waits a moment, then does the next one. Once Andy is sure he isn't misreading her intentions, he undresses himself in record time. He finishes undressing before Vicky does.

VICKY (CONT'D)
(softly)
Would you get the light?

Andy stumbles hurrying to the bathroom. He turns out the light. Finding the music on the stereo unsuitable to the moment, he puts it on eject. Silence in the room. Vicky is now under the covers, apparently ready. Andy just stands by the stereo, looking to Vicky. It is evident that she wants him. He gathers his courage, approaches her. They embrace. Without a word, they make love, tenderly and a bit awkwardly. As they progress, their bodies perspire abnormally.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

VICKY'S BED - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Andy and Vicky lie exhausted and soaked in perspiration, their faces streaked, their hair matted and wet. Andy seems pleasantly lost in thought. Vicky looks at him lovingly.

VICKY
What're you thinking?

Andy looks to her, smiles lovingly.

ANDY
I never thought it got so hot.

VICKY
(only now realizing)
Is this your first time, too?

Andy shrugs his embarrassed acknowledgement. Vicky is delighted to learn that they have this in common.

VICKY (CONT'D)
I love you, Andy McGee.

They kiss. Andy has a thought.

ANDY

Vicky...?

(pause)

Do you think it's because of the
experiment? The drugs?

VICKY

Do I think what is?

ANDY

Us.

(pause)

What have I got that George hasn't
got?

Vicky looks protectively to her lover, touched at his insecurity.
She kisses him.

VICKY

Me.

ANDY

Some funny things happened in there.

VICKY

I fell in love with you when you
tried to throw that frisbee.

ANDY

(pleased)

Really?

(pause, gets a nod)

Really?

He becomes smug.

VICKY

If anything, the drugs enhanced our
feelings. Got rid of inhibitions...?

(remembering)

Did you see me knock down those
dominoes?

Andy shakes his head "no". He grows more thoughtful, uneasy.

ANDY

I tried to get you to see that guy
when he was tearing his eyes out.

VICKY

You were hallucinating.

Andy wonders... thinks awhile. Vicky nuzzles him affectionately.

ANDY
(preoccupied)
He hit the chart.
(pause)
He got blood on the chart.

VICKY
(lost)
What?

EXT. CAMPUS - NEAR BIOLOGY BUILDING - NIGHT

Very little light illuminates the scene. Andy and Vicky, their sweaty bodies towelled off, their sweaty hair combed back, walk surreptitiously toward the Biology Building.

A Campus Cop comes around a corner, punches his station with a time key, meanders off.

Andy ducks into the shadows at the sight of the cop. He pulls Vicky with him.

VICKY
What is this James Bond shit?

Andy smiles sheepishly.

ANDY
Gimme a break. This might be serious.

Vicky tries to hide her skepticism of Andy's plan. Once the guard is gone, he leads her to the building.

They find the door locked.

VICKY
Let's forget it.

A MOMENT LATER - A SECOND FLOOR LEDGE

Andy inches himself along a sagging tree branch, makes the transfer to the building ledge. He finds the window unlocked, slides it open, enters.

Vicky watches anxiously below, afraid for Andy, wary of being seen.

BUILDING ENTRANCE

Andy lets Vicky in.

INT. BIOLOGY BUILDING

Eerie silence and moonlight give the building an ominous quality. Andy and Vicky climb the stairs.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

They pass rooms 64, 66, and 68, then stop before room 70. It appears quite normal. Andy tries the door. It is unlocked.

INSIDE ROOM 70

Andy and Vicky quietly cross the room toward the wall charts, passing the skeletons and embryos along the way. Vicky feels very uneasy. Her cynicism is replaced by fear. The room is once again a classroom.

ANDY

(in a whisper)

He hit it with his hand.

Vicky's eyes widen as Andy reaches up to pull down the rolled-up anatomy chart. They are startled by a sudden noise.

It is a tree branch tapping the classroom window.

Andy and Vicky relax again. Andy again reaches for the chart, this time grasping its handle, pulling it down.

It is clean. Andy examines more closely for traces of blood. Nothing.

VICKY

Satisfied?

Andy shrugs that he must have been wrong.

VICKY (CONT'D)

Now can we go?

ANDY

(baffled)

I must've imagined it.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS BELL TOWER - NIGHT

A CLINKING SOUND as the moon lights the stone surface of the tower.

Metal spiked climbing boots dig into the tower. CAMERA REVEALS they are worn by the Blond Male from the experiment. He hammers a piton into the tower. He is singing from LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS as though he is being accompanied by the Beatles live. He reaches the top. He looks to the moon.

BLOND MALE

(singing, heartfelt)

Cellophane flowers of yellow and green,
Towering over your heh-ed.

Look for the girl with the sun in her
eyes,

And she's gone... bowm! bowm! bowm!

Lucy... (in the sky with diamonds)!

He interrupts his singing with a swan dive off the tower, continuing the chorus as he hurtles head first to the sidewalk below.

AN IMPLOSION as his skull splashes on the concrete.

CUT TO:

INT. NONDESCRIPT OFFICE BUILDING BASEMENT - CANTEEN AREA - DAY

CAP HOLLISTER, 54, is graying. He has kindly eyes. He speaks quietly to someone o.s. He is a gentleman.

CAP

This is the biggest fuckup since
the Bay of Pigs.

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that he is standing with a cup of coffee freshly acquired from a vending machine. He is with Dr. Helen Rahv, now more feminine and rather attractive, in a bureaucratic way. She no longer wears hospital whites. She fishes in her purse for some change. Cap beats her to it.

RAHV

(appreciative)

Hit the Extra Sugar Button.

Cap does so. They wait for her cup to fill.

RAHV (CONT'D)

So... what did the Secretary say?

CAP

It wasn't just the Secretary,
Helen. The Joint Chiefs discussed
it, too.

The coffee is ready. Helen lifts the little plastic door and takes out the cup.

RAHV

And...?

CAP

I hate to be the one to tell you...

RAHV

We got results!

They make their way to a sterile looking table amidst many just like it. They are surrounded by office workers, but they are at a discreet enough distance to allow them to converse.

CAP

(gesturing to the seat)

This okay?

Helen nods. She is upset now. They sit.

CAP (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Two students are dead! Another one thinks she's a praying mantis.

RAHV

(between sips)

Cap, no one in this agency could ever doubt my compassion for young people. But let's be honest. A few lives... to preserve the safety and freedom of 220 million Americans... that is not unreasonable.

CAP

I was severely reprimanded for not using the rats.

(CONTINUED)

RAHV

Do those assholes realize we cannot converse with rats? How do they propose that we interview them?

CAP

(always polite, quiet)
Fairchild stood up and moaned and groaned about how we should have used inmates.

RAHV

Is Fairchild going to ask a convict with telekinetic powers to go back to his cell? I'd like to see that.

CAP

They've shut down the experiment.

Rahv sees her whole career abruptly halted. She remains gracious, but we can see that she is seething.

RAHV

This is the most important breakthrough we've achieved in fifty years... possibly ever.

CAP

The feeling in the room was this: nothing... nothing is worth the risk of revealing the existence of the Shop. It took us two hours to calm down the President when he found out.

(pause, glance around)
And if you think covering up the deaths of two students in northern California is easy... think again.

RAHV

We're going to do followup on the other four, aren't we?

CAP

Only the girl. She's in a hospital. The three duds we will just ignore. We're out of their lives... by order of the Secretary of Defense. Okay?

RAHV

(after a long silence)
Cap...? Will this impact my job?

CAP
 (with utmost kindness)
 Relax, Helen.
 This is America.
 (big smile)
 They'll find something for us to
 do.

EXT. HARRISON, OHIO NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

The neighborhood is quiet, peaceful. The houses look alike. The lawns are all well-kept. Everyone's sprinkler is on. SUPERIMPOSE:

1975
 HARRISON, OHIO

It is the middle of the night, as evidenced by lights out in all the homes in the neighborhood. After a moment, one bedroom light suddenly comes on. CAMERA MOVES TOWARD this house as the dining room light comes on, then the kitchen light. A moment later, the garage light comes on, then the garage door opens. A battered '71 SuperBeetle screeches out. ANDY, now 30, jumps out of the car, runs toward the house, stops abruptly, remembers to open the passenger side door, runs back to the house to meet a very pregnant VICKY, now 29, as she waddles out of the house. CAMERA is within dialog range now. We HEAR Vicky doing her LaMaze breathing. She nods "yes" to each of Andy's frantic questions. He ushers her into the Volkswagen.

ANDY
 You got the washcloths?
 (pause for nod)
 You got your focal point?
 (pause for nod)
 We got the tennis balls...
 shit, I think I used them
 the other day...

VICKY
 (out of breath)
 I put them back.

Andy kisses Vicky gratefully on the cheek.

ANDY
 Pillows?

VICKY
 Yes... can we go now?

Andy SLAMS her door shut, runs around to his side. She lies back in her seat, breathing as indicated in her LaMaze classes. The car SCREECHES out of the driveway.

DRIVING SHOT - VOLKSWAGEN - NIGHT

Vicky is in the early stages of labor. Andy is a nervous wreck.

ANDY

You okay?

VICKY

Can you slow down?

ANDY

(not slowing down)

Maybe we can get pulled over
and get an escort.

Vicky gives Andy a sideways glance as if to say, "Please don't do anything stupid now". Andy is already calculating his plan. He approaches an intersection. The light turns red. Vicky looks panicked. Andy looks pleased. There is a police cruiser approaching from the opposite direction.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(half to himself, half to
Vicky)

I've always wanted to do this...

Andy runs the red light. He endangers no one, since the police car is the only other vehicle in the vicinity. Andy eagerly looks into his rearview mirror, watching for the cop to turn around.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Wait'll he sees your belly.

But the police cruiser proceeds straight ahead, making no response to Andy's violation. Andy is pissed.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Look at that guy!

(disgusted)

Ya take a lousy left turn without
signalling and they nail ya...

(pause)

Where are they when you need 'em?

Vicky is amused.

VICKY

Maybe he saw my belly.

They drive on, Andy still perturbed at being ignored by the cop.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM

Vicky is on the table, her feet in the stirrups. She is in advanced labor. She is sweating profusely. Andy, a LaMaze father, is right by her side with the ice cubes and the washcloth. Andy is perspiring just as much as Vicky. Vicky is doing well, but she occasionally loses her confidence, gives out a MOAN. Every time she does so, Andy seems to be in pain. Andy is still frantic, but he has more reason to be now. He addresses one of TWO attending NURSES.

ANDY

When can we push?

NURSE #1

Doctor is on his way...

ANDY

Can we get Doctor to move
his ass a little faster?

Vicky stops the conversation with another MOAN. Andy hurts again. Nurse #1 looks anxiously to Nurse #2. Nurse #2 exits.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(to Vicky)

How ya doin'?

VICKY

(between pants)

How the fuck does it look
like I'm doing?

Nurse #1

(quietly, to Andy)

Don't take it personally. She's
in Transition.

ANDY

We know she's in transition.
When can we push?

Vicky lets out another MOAN.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Hang on, Vicky.

Just then, the DOCTOR enters with Nurse #2. He is still dressing.

DOCTOR

(unaware of the rush)

How are we doing in here?

(sees Vicky's condition)

Oh, my...

CUT TO:

A MOMENT LATER - DELIVERY ROOM

Doctor, both Nurses, Andy and Vicky are at their most intense.

DOCTOR

Push...

Vicky pushes. She feels a combination of pain and pleasure.

VICKY

Oh, Andy...

ANDY

We're almost there, honey.
I love you, Vicky.

VICKY

I wanna push again.

ANDY

Not yet, honey...

VICKY

Can I have an ice cube?

Andy panics. He is out of ice cubes. Everyone in the room is intensely sweaty and hot... abnormally so.

ANDY

Honey... I think they all melted.

Before Vicky can show her utter despair at the ice cube situation, the Doctor breaks in.

DOCTOR

Missus McGee, I think we're
ready when you are...

Vicky pushes once again. Andy sees the child before Vicky does.

ANDY

Look! Look! Hair!

VICKY

Can I see?

Nurse #2 positions a mirror so Vicky can see.

VICKY (CONT'D)

Ohhh...

(to Andy, with joyful tears)
Our baby...!

ANDY
It's beautiful...
(to Nurse #1)
Is it a boy or a girl?

NURSE
(patiently)
We can't tell from the head.

ANDY
When can we push again?

DOCTOR
Right now.

Vicky pushes. The baby is born.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
It's a little girl!

Vicky screams with delight. Andy is dazed with joy. Tears flow freely.

ANDY
A little girl...!
We did it! Oh, look at her
little body... look at her
little toes.
(under his breath)
One, two, three, four, five...
(pause, relief)
She's got 'em all! A perfect
little girl...
(hugging Vicky)
Look what you went and did!!!
I love you.

VICKY
(joyful, tired)
Is she breathing?

Andy panics at the question, is immediately put at ease by the Doctor.

DOCTOR
In a second...

Doctor SPANKS little CHARLIE MCGEE on the bottom, bringing forth her first little CRY of protest. It is darling. The parents are thrilled. The nurses are happy. The Doctor is pleased. The Fetal Heart Monitor EXPLODES. Debris flies everywhere. SPARKS shoot out of the machine. The Doctor shields the Baby from the danger.

DOCTOR
What the hell...?

VICKY
Andy, what...?!

ANDY
I don't know.

NURSE #2
(to Andy and Vicky)
It's all right. Are you all
right?

Electrical fumes hang in the room. Doctor continues to shield the Baby as he disconnects the umbilical cord and carries her out of the room.

DOCTOR
(as he works and exits)
Your baby's fine. I just want
to get her out of this room.
You'll get to hold her in a minute.
(to Nurse #1, angrily,
but quietly)
Get these poor people out of here
before something else blows up.

The Nurses and Doctor are as stunned as are Andy and Vicky. Nurse #1 immediately begins to prepare Vicky for departure from the room.

NURSE #1
(to Vicky and Andy)
She's a beautiful little girl.

Andy and Vicky, their joy somewhat shaken by the incident, respond with vague smiles.

INT. HOSPITAL ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE OFFICE - DAY

Andy sits opposite the drab desk of a birdlike hospital administrator, one MR. ELDON PEABODY, 61. The two seem to be at a standoff. In the background, typewriters TAP and phones RING. Andy is weary and disgruntled. Peabody sits going over a bill, fingering an adding machine deftly. The MECHANICAL SOUNDS of the machine as it prints figures on the little paper roll represent serious gouges into the McGee family budget.

PEABODY
(prissily)
I get the same figure each
time, Mister McGee. At least
our mathematics are in agreement.

ANDY

You shouldn't have called a collection agency.

It is part of the administrator's birdlike personality to avoid direct eye contact with Andy at all times in this discussion.

PEABODY

This hospital has policies, Mister McGee. I'm sure the university where you teach has academic policies. We have fiscal policies. Your bill is more than ninety days overdue. Our policy is to employ a collection agency on delinquent accounts.

ANDY

It's not that we can't pay. We won't pay. You got our insurance money, but I'll be damned if we're gonna get stuck for damages to your delivery room equipment. And we think it was pretty sleazy of you to stick that on our bill.

(frustrated pause)

Will you look at me when I talk to you?

Embarrassed, Peabody makes eye contact with Andy, who is nearly at his wit's end.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(trying for dignity)

My wife and child could have been hurt in there. We're not suing you because we aren't that way. But after what we went through in there, we don't feel we owe you another cent. You can send collection agencies after us 'til hell freezes over, but what I'd like you to do is tear up that damn bill here and now, and tell your collection agency to leave us alone.

Peabody immediately tears up Andy's bill. Andy is confused. As the scene progresses, ALL SOUND EFFECTS take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY, the effect diminishing as Andy's headache sets in. For the moment, Andy just stares at Peabody in disbelief.

PEABODY

(dials phone, smiles at
a confused Andy)
Hello? Gerome? This is Eldon
Peabody.

(hands Andy the torn bill)
Fine. Nice of you to ask. And
you? How's Mildred? Good, good.
Listen, I have a Mister Andrew
McGee here with me. We've had a
little talk, and I'm going to
adjust his bill, so why don't
you just leave him alone?

(pause)

I realize that.

(takes abuse graciously)
No, that's correct. They don't
owe us a cent.

(pause)

And Gerome... I'll correct it
on our computer. Absolutely.
And thanks. Best to Mildred.
Bye.

Peabody hangs up the phone, seems pleased with himself.

PEABODY (CONT'D)

(cheerfully)
All set. Anything else?

ANDY

(in pain)
No... thanks.

PEABODY

(concerned)
Are you feeling all right?

ANDY

Just a headache. They come and
go.

(gets up)
I'll be fine.
(extends hand for a shake)
Thanks. Thanks very much.

PEABODY

(shaking hands)
Don't mention it, Mister McGee.
That's what I'm here for. Hope
we can serve you again sometime.

ANDY

(leaving, confused)
Thanks.

INT. MCGEE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Under ebbing candlelight, Vicky pours the last of a bottle of Chateauneuf du Pape into Andy's wine glass. They are both mildly intoxicated. The wine trickles out, a few drops linger, and Vicky holds the bottle over Andy's glass.

ANDY

Squeeze harder.

VICKY

(giggling)

I don't want to waste it.

She stops pouring, puts down the bottle, raises her glass in a toast as Andy picks up his glass.

VICKY (CONT'D)

To my hero...

They CLINK glasses, a little too hard.

ANDY

Careful...!

They drink. They put down their glasses. They enjoy just sitting and looking lovingly at each other in the candlelight. Not one to let past achievements go unheralded, Andy brings up the subject of his encounter at the hospital.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Maybe we let them off too easy.

VICKY

Andy... Charlie's all paid for now. That's good enough.

ANDY

(thinking)

Yeah, but... he gave in too easy. It's like I pushed a button or something. Probably when I told him we weren't inclined to sue them... maybe he thought that was a threat. Which makes me think maybe I should've asked for money.

VICKY

Don't be greedy.

ANDY

Vicky, that wouldn't be greedy. I'd just be exercising my considerable skills as a negotiator.

Vicky gets up from the table, a seductive look in her eyes.

VICKY

How about exercising some of your
other considerable skills, McGee?

ANDY

(rising)

Could we discuss this in the other
room?

Vicky flashes a smile over her shoulder as she walks down the hall toward their bedroom. She bares one shoulder as she slinks away, hoping Andy will see. He does. He hurriedly snuffs out both dining room candles with his fingers, nearly burning himself. He follows her down the hall.

Vicky has stopped in an open doorway halfway down the hall. She looks in peacefully. Andy catches up with her. He joins her in the tranquil moment.

POV ANDY & VICKY - CHARLIE

Their four-month-old baby girl, CHARLIE, sleeps fitfully in her crib.

HALLWAY

Andy and Vicky watch for a moment. Andy nuzzles Vicky's neck. Vicky looks a little concerned.

VICKY

She sleeps like you.

ANDY

Nightmares.

VICKY

What's that smell?

Andy sniffs, takes a guess.

ANDY

The candles...?

VICKY

(in horror)

Andy!!

POV ANDY & VICKY - CHARLIE

Her crib is smoldering. Her pillow ignites into flames.

HALLWAY AND BEDROOM

Vicky grabs Charlie and runs out of the room as Andy battles the small fire, snuffing it out by overturning the pillow and suffocating the fire. The sheets are singed.

EXT. MCGEE HOUSE - NIGHT

Vicky sits on the curb with Charlie bundled in her arms. She rocks her baby gently, singing to her.

VICKY

(singing)

Hush little baby, don't say a word,
Papa's gonna buy you a mockin' bird.
If that mockin' bird don't sing,
Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring.
If that diamond ring is brass,
Papa's gonna buy you a lookin' glass.
If that lookin' glass gets broke,
Papa's gonna buy you a billy goat.

Andy approaches the curb from the house. He is dishevelled. He carries an empty water bucket, sets it down next to his wife and child. He puts his arm around Vicky as she continues the lullaby.

VICKY (CONT'D)

(without a break)

If that billy goat don't pull,
Papa's gonna buy you a cart and bull.
If that cart and bull fall down,
You'll still be the prettiest little
baby in town.

Vicky looks up to Andy as she continues rocking Charlie in silence. She looks at him questioningly. He doesn't have any answers.

ANDY

Let's go in.

VICKY

I want her to sleep with us.

ANDY

(equally concerned)

Okay.

Andy kisses Vicky on the forehead, looks down at his sleeping child.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY

Charlie coos and teeters in her playpen. She is nearly a year old. Vicky watches on as Andy stands her on her legs and wraps her hands tightly around the railing. She remains upright but very wobbly. Vicky and Andy are clearly pleased. A toy MUSIC BOX plays.

One of Charlie's feet steps back and trips on her Teddy Bear. She slips and falls, hitting her chin on the wooden sidings. Loud SCREAMING accompanies her tears as she stares at Teddy.

The Teddy Bear incinerates instantaneously, much to the shock of Charlie's parents. Nothing else is touched. Andy snatches Charlie out of the playpen, holds her safely away from the ashes. Vicky and Andy exchange looks of bewilderment. Charlie feels much better now. The MUSIC BOX plays on.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Andy sits near a courtyard fountain, sharing a bench with a lean and bearded PHYSICS PROFESSOR, 43. The older man has an eye for young coeds, who walk by them throughout the scene. In the b.g., the COLLEGE CHIMES signal change of classes. Andy looks tired and haggard. He needs to shave.

PHYSICS PROF

It sounds like your neighbor's
describing spontaneous combustion.

(referring to passing trio)

Look, look, look... the white jeans.
Mmh.

(back on the subject)

How well do you know this neighbor?

ANDY

(lying)

Fairly well.

PHYSICS PROF

Is she prone to exaggeration?

Any history of mental um... y'know?

ANDY

She seems to have all her marbles,
if that's what you're getting at.

PHYSICS PROF

(distracted again)

Look at this one in the blue.
God, I love teaching.

Andy doesn't share his colleague's enthusiasm for the quarry at the moment.

ANDY

Well, if you don't know about this stuff, who does?

PHYSICS PROF

Nobody, really. As I recall, the Pentagon was interested in S.H.C. -- that's spontaneous human combustion-- about five years ago. They wanted it for Viet Nam. But you can imagine the RFP on that. Proxmire gave it the Golden Fleece award and the whole thing died in some congressional committee.

Another pretty coed walks by. She addresses the Physics Prof.

COED

Hi, Rick.

PHYSICS PROF

Hi, there... Carole.
(she is gone; to Andy)
I had her last term.

"Rick" raises an eyebrow, in case Andy didn't get his meaning. Andy did.

ANDY

So...? What should my neighbor do?

PHYSICS PROF

Well... there are about seventy-five documented cases of spontaneous combustion... throughout history, I mean. But ah, before she gets on the bandwagon, and certainly before you get on it with her, I'd recommend she get some professional help...

(responding to Andy's puzzled expression)
counseling.

(pause)

The people who report these things invariably end up totally discredited. Nobody wants to believe in that stuff, and there's one very good reason for that.

ANDY

What's that?

PHYSICS PROF

It's total bullshit.

(pause, suggestively)

How old is your neighbor, anyway?

ANDY
(depressed)
Forget it.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - SEVEN YEARS LATER

We are in the same house, but many of the furnishings have improved by replacement. ANDY, now 38, is harried as he tries to get out of the house. VICKY, now 37, is trying to help him find his briefcase. CHARLIE, a pretty girl of 8, sits at the kitchen table, her attention divided between her mother, her father, her breakfast, and her pilot-suited Snoopy plush toy beside her. Other toys can be seen around the house as we follow the adults in their search for the briefcase. CAMERA MOVES eventually REVEAL several fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and a professionally-installed fire hose in the home. SUPERIMPOSE:

1983

Andy is getting upset.

ANDY
I had it ten minutes ago.
(tapping the kitchen
table)
I put it right here.

VICKY
Charlie, have you seen Daddy's
briefcase?

CHARLIE
That brown one?

VICKY (simultaneously) ANDY
Yes! Yes!

Charlie thinks for a minute. The parents wait. Andy taps the table impatiently.

CHARLIE
I saw it yesterday.

The parents become animated again, continuing their search.

ANDY
I just had it.
(to Charlie)
Eat your cereal, Charles.

CHARLIE
My name's not Charles.

VICKY
(following Andy)
Why do you call her that? You
know that antagonizes her.

ANDY
I am antagonized at the moment.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Andy and Vicky down the hall, leaving Charlie to
eat her cereal with a pout.

VICKY
It's not the end of the world, Andy.

ANDY
They're going to offer me a full
professorship today, and I'm going
to say, "Sorry, fellas, I can't
play with you. I lost my briefcase".
(trips over fire extinguisher)
And this shit just gets on my nerves.

Vicky stops short, both hurt by the comment and concerned for Charlie's
feelings, should their daughter hear Andy's outburst.

VICKY
Will you try to control yourself?

Andy, who has ducked into the bathroom, sheepishly returns to the hall,
holding his briefcase. Vicky looks redeemed, waits for an apology.

ANDY
Wonder who could've brought it
in there?

Andy kisses Vicky goodbye. She takes it silently, half angry, half
amused. CAMERA FOLLOWS ANDY past Charlie.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Bye, Charlene...!

CHARLIE
Bye, Andrew...!

Andy stops abruptly at the door, looks back to Charlie.

ANDY
(mock stern)
What?!

Charlie gets down from her chair, runs to her father, gives him a big
kiss and a hug.

CHARLIE
Bye, Daddy.

INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - THE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Andy enters the large and imposing conference room. He is suitably ruffled, and he has his briefcase. His nervousness changes to surprise when he finds the Dean sitting alone.

DEAN

Come in, McGee. Have a seat.

ANDY

Where's the Committee?

DEAN

I cancelled your review. Sit down.

Andy sits, confused.

DEAN (CONT'D)

McGee, no one thinks more highly of you than I do... and I mean that both on an academic and on a personal level.

Andy just stares. The Dean can't look him in the eye.

DEAN (CONT'D)

The sad fact is that this university, by resolution of the Board of Trustees, cannot give out tenure as easily as we once could. We are in a fiscal crisis, McGee. It's a question of budget.

ANDY

But I've seen the budget.

DEAN

You've seen the publicly-released budget. I'm talking about the real one. Just don't push me on this, McGee, and I'm sure you'll get your tenure... eventually.

Andy is too stunned to respond.

DEAN (CONT'D)

I'm truly sorry, McGee. That's all for now.

Andy sits for a moment, sees the Dean silently plead with him to get up and leave the room. Andy stands, starts out, thinks, gets up his nerve, and storms across the imposing room, stares the Dean eyeball to eyeball.

ANDY

(voice quavering)

This isn't fair, sir. You can't treat me like this.

As Andy speaks, ALL SOUND EFFECTS, including the campus CHIMES, take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY, a phenomenon which diminishes as Andy's headache sets in.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Why don't you tell me the real reason?

DEAN

(totally cooperative)

I'm being blackmailed into tilting our only tenured position this year to Alex Crumfield.

ANDY

(outraged)

Crumfield doesn't even know his subject!

DEAN

He knows the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of this university, McGee. That's all he has to know.

ANDY

(still baffled)

Well... what do they have on you?

DEAN

It's a well-kept secret that I am on probation for embezzlement.

Andy can't believe he is hearing this. His head hurts.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Some short-haired pencil-pusher in the treasurer's office blew the whistle on me two years ago. I have too much on the rest of these bastards for them to boot me out, so we have a little arrangement going.

(pause)

I'm just sorry it has to affect your career.

ANDY

(angrily)

Well, it won't!

(trembling)

You tell the Trustees to keep their noses out of my career... or they'll be answering questions before the federal labor board.

DEAN

(enthusiastically)

Good idea, McGee.

The Dean picks up his phone, begins to place a call. Andy stares in disbelief.

ANDY

Wait a minute....!

The Dean obediently hangs up. Andy, his head hurting, is catching on to his newly discovered powers.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(tentatively)

I'd like you to do something else first.

(pause, almost afraid to ask)

I'd like you to pat your head and rub your belly at the same time.

The Dean complies fully and with dignity. Andy just stares in awe.

INT. MCGEE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andy and Vicky sit upright in their bed. Andy has Vicky by the shoulders. She is crying.

ANDY

Honey, come on. Let's keep this positive. Don't cry.

(pause, optimistic)

This is a special power we're talking about. C'mon, smile.

Vicky sniffs.

ANDY (CONT'D)

It explains a whole lot, Vicky.

The headaches, the sleeplessness...

(new realization)

It's probably why I've been able to do so much in the English Department.

Heh. And I just thought I was smart.

(pause)

It's probably those drugs we took.

Vicky turns sharply on Andy, her eyes filled with tears.

VICKY

What does this say about us?

For a moment, Andy is at a loss. He realizes his wife's fear, but he doesn't know what to say.

ANDY

(finally)

I love you. When I look into your eyes, it's different. Believe me.

Vicky seems unconsolable. She has a terrible realization, covers her eyes from contact with Andy.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(feeling awful about that)

Vicky, it's not just eye contact.

I have to "push". It's a definite feeling of "pushing". I've never felt that with you.

(pause)

I get headaches! Have I ever gotten a headache from you?

Vicky slowly uncovers her eyes, pouts needily. She embraces Andy.

VICKY

(after a moment)

Can you just do this whenever you want?

ANDY

I don't know. Today was the first time I ever tried.

VICKY

Please don't do it again.

ANDY

Vicky, this is a gift. I have to learn to use it.

VICKY

They've made you a freak, Andy! And they've done it to Charlie, too!

CHARLIE'S BEDROOM

Charlie, snuggled up to her Snoopy, is awakened by the shouting down the hall.

ANDY (O.S.)

Leave Charlie out of this!

VICKY (O.S.)

Charlie is in it, Mister. And as far as I'm concerned, she's a helluva lot more dangerous than you are!

Charlie sits on the edge of her bed, listens.

MCGEE BEDROOM

ANDY

Charlie doesn't even know she can do it.

VICKY

Bull shit.

ANDY

Don't talk to me that way, Vicky.

VICKY

(sarcastically)
Yes, Master.

ANDY

Cut it out!

VICKY
Anything you say, Master.

ANDY
Dammit, I'm trying to deal with
this, and your sarcasm doesn't help.

VICKY
We need outside help is what we need.

ANDY
We're handling this on our own!

VICKY
No, we're not!

ANDY
Do you realize what a circus this
will be if we go outside?!

VICKY
It already is a circus! And now
you tell me I'm the only normal
one. We need help, Andy. Professional
help. Someone who can work with
Charlie.

ANDY
They'll take her away.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
No!!

The startled parents look to their doorway. Charlie has been
standing there. They don't know how long.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
No!!

Vicky's hands ignite into balls of flame. Andy looks on in horror.
Charlie doesn't know what happened. Vicky runs across the room,
exits to the hallway toward the bathroom. Andy follows her. CAMERA
FOLLOWS them. Charlie stands in the doorway, confused and frightened.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Mommy!!

BATHROOM

Andy and Vicky stand in the shower, the water running. They are
still in their bed clothes. Vicky's hands are badly burned.

Charlie enters. She watches her parents from the doorway.

ANDY
(harshly)
Look at your mother's hands.

VICKY
Andy, don't.

Charlie doesn't move. She starts to cry.

ANDY
You could've killed her. You
could have killed your mother!

Charlie runs out of the room. Andy goes after her.

HALLWAY

Andy grabs hold of Charlie. He holds her.

ANDY
She loves you, Charlie. She loves
you.

Vicky arrives a moment later, her hands wrapped in towels.

CHARLIE
Mommy... Mommy... I'm sorry.

Mother and daughter embrace. Andy has tears in his eyes.

EXT. HOWARD JOHNSON'S RESTAURANT - DAY

A pale green U.S. Government Issue sedan is parked near the entrance. Helen Rahv, now 50, approaches. Cap Hollister, now 69, gets out of the green car, intercepts her. She is pleased to see him.

CAP
(pleasantly)
Helen?

RAHV
Cap?

INT. HOWARD JOHNSON'S

Cap and Helen sit at a booth. Their salads are being served by a WAITRESS, 23. She facially reacts to the conversation before leaving the two alone. They don't notice her. MUZAK PLAYS in b.g.

CAP
You're as pretty as ever. Fifteen
years haven't changed you a bit.

RAHV
(falsely modest)
You're kind.

The waitress seems to think Cap is kind, too. She departs.

RAHV (CONT'D)
Well, my work's been rewarding.

CAP
What've you been up to?

RAHV
(smiling)
Shame on you, Cap. That's classified.

CAP
(leaning forward)
So is this: The Lot Six project is
on again.

Rahv drops her fork.

CAP (CONT'D)
Two of the subjects married...
each other!
(pause)
They had a child.

Rahv finds this even more astounding. She is dumbfounded.

CAP (CONT'D)
Their lives have been getting
more and more complicated, it
seems.

RAHV
(finding her voice)
How do you know this?

CAP
They had an accident last week.
They had it taken care of at their
local hospital in Ohio.

RAHV
But how...?

CAP
(interrupting)
Our computer picked it up from data
entered in the hospital computer.

RAHV
What kind of accident?

CAP

The mother's hands caught fire.

(pause)

They claim it was spontaneous.

(pause)

They think it's the little girl.

Rahv is elated, awestruck. Cap shares her enthusiasm.

RAHV

We never anticipated offspring.

(pause)

I want that child.

CAP

We're on it, Helen. You'll have her tomorrow.

RAHV

What about the Secretary of Defense?

CAP

That's what I love about Washington: politicians come and go, but government service is forever.

(pause)

They're with us on this.

(moves closer, speaks softly)

They appreciate the possibilities.

RAHV

What about the parents?

CAP

That's being taken care of.

EXT. A SMALL REGIONAL AIRPORT

A Continental Airliner lands.

INT./EXT. BAGGAGE CLAIM AREA

Andy carries only a small suitcase with him as he walks to the passenger loading zone adjacent to the sidewalk. There he sees Quincey, now 38. Quincey hops out of his brand new Alfa Romeo convertible.

QUINCEY

You travel light.

ANDY

Just a day trip. Long time, Quincey.

Quincey slaps Andy on the shoulder.

QUINCEY
Good ta see ya.

DRIVING SHOT - HIGHWAY

Quincey is showing off the prowess of his hot new car as he and Andy converse.

ANDY
(admiring the car)
So, it looks like General Dynamics
is treating you all right.

QUINCEY
Couldn't be better, really.
(pause)
I'm glad you're thinking of applying.

ANDY
I never pictured myself working in
a defense plant.

QUINCEY
Hey, with your background, you could
make good bucks in publications.

Quincey pulls off a fancy maneuver which nearly frightens Andy to death. He settles back into traffic.

ANDY
Pretty good.

QUINCEY
Yeah, I got sick of academics. What
I have now is just a job, but it's a
good job. Nine to five, y'know?

ANDY
I keep thinking about that quote, though.
"The destruction of the world will be
achieved at the hands of people just doing
their job"...?

QUINCEY
I look at it this way: if somebody's
gonna blow up the world, I want a
front row seat.

ANDY
Interesting.

INT. SIZZLER RESTAURANT

Andy and Quincey drink the house wine and munch on prime rib.
Andy notices a photo I.D. badge on Quincey's shirt.

ANDY
What's the badge?

QUINCEY
(removing it, pocketing it)
Forgot I had it on. Security.
I've got top secret clearance now.

ANDY
That's impressive, Quince.
What kind of stuff do you know?

QUINCEY
Eh hey... you'll have to come to
work for us and find out.

ANDY
I want to ask you a question. It's
not really related to your job now.

Quincey shrugs, a little nervous.

ANDY (CONT'D)
What do you remember about that
experiment Vicky and I went through
back in school?

QUINCEY
Heh heh. Not much. That was years
ago.

ANDY
Like... what did they learn?

QUINCEY
Andy, I was just a lab assistant.
I didn't stick with it. I haven't
the slightest idea.

Andy Pushes Quincey. ALL SOUND EFFECTS take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY,
a phenomenon which diminishes as Andy's headache sets in.

ANDY
Tell me everything you know.

QUINCEY
(without batting an eye)
I don't know where to begin.

ANDY

What did they do to Vicky and me?

QUINCEY

They gave you a drug they hoped would yield telekinetic powers in its users.

ANDY

And what did they learn?

QUINCEY

They terminated the experiment after two suicides and one cerebral hemorrhage. You and Vicky showed no symptoms, so you were forgotten.

Andy looks momentarily relieved.

QUINCEY (CONT'D)

But the project has been put back into operation based on the discovery that you and Vicky married and had a child who apparently has pyrokinetic powers. She starts fires.

Andy's head is killing him, but this news hurts more.

ANDY

What'll happen?

QUINCEY

(totally casually)

Your child will be taken into the custody of the federal government, and you two will either be confined or exterminated, depending on your level of cooperation.

ANDY

Are you putting me on?

QUINCEY

No.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH

Andy pushes ahead of a LARGE WOMAN who is about to use the phone.

ANDY

Emergency.

He tries to place a call, gets a recording indicating all circuits are busy. He looks terrified.

OHIO NEIGHBORHOOD

Outside the McGee's house, a pale green U.S. Government Issue sedan drives into the driveway. TWO AGENTS, bland and nondescript in their white short sleeve shirts and gray slacks, walk to the door, RING the BELL. Vicky answers.

FIRST AGENT
Missus McGee?

VICKY
(unsure)
Yes?

FIRST AGENT
(showing his false I.D.)
We're with the Department of
Health, Education, and Welfare,
and we were wondering if your
little girl is home?

VICKY
(uneasy, stepping back)
Why?

SECOND AGENT
May we come in?

VICKY
Um, wait...

Vicky doesn't know how to treat these strangers. The two agents exchange glances.

VICKY (CONT'D)
What do you want with her?

FIRST AGENT
Just some routine questions, Ma'am.

Vicky looks suspicious.

INT. AIRPORT TICKET COUNTER

Andy tries to cut in line at the ticket counter, upsetting CUSTOMERS.

TICKET AGENT
Sir! These people are ahead of you!

ANDY
I've got to catch the next plane.

ANGRY CUSTOMER
So do I, Mack. Get in line.

Andy seethes.

EXT. SMALL OHIO AIRPORT

An Airliner taxis to a stop. The portable stairway is wheeled to the plane. As soon as the door opens, Andy pushes through, on the run. Fellow passengers and crew look on, somewhat irritated.

INT. OHIO AIRPORT

Andy tries a phone. No answer. He is extremely worried.

EXT. OHIO AIRPORT PARKING LOT TOLL BOOTH

Andy's car is second in a line of four cars. He drives a '78 Volvo.

ANDY
C'mon, c'mon...

He gets to pull up to the booth.

TOLL TAKER
(laconically)
Hello...

Andy gives the Toll Taker his ticket. It seems to take forever for the person to figure out which side is top and which is bottom. Andy waits impatiently for a moment, then starts peeling off bills. He hands them out the window.

ANDY
Here. Keep the change. Open
the gate.

TOLL TAKER
(with frustrating slowness)
Wait a minute...

Andy throws the money at the Toll Taker, SCREECHES away, KNOCKING the gate off.

EXT. STREET MCGEE HOUSE - DAY

Andy's car swerves to a halt, its front tire bumping up over the curb.

EXT. FRONT DOOR

Andy nervously tries the key. No need. It is unlocked. He lets it swing open. An uneasy pause.

INT. KITCHEN

ANDY (O.S.)
Vicky?

Andy enters. Empty. Neat and clean but for an overturned chair by the breakfast table. He pauses.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Vicky!

No answer. He moves closer to the table. A salt shaker is on its side. Next to it sits a full cup of coffee, cold. Andy rights the chair, turns and moves down the hallway. CAMERA FOLLOWS.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Honey?!

He stops by the laundry room. We HEAR the DRYER still going.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM

Andy enters. He is exhausted, worried. His head hurts. He absently unpockets a bottle of aspirin, dumps out four, swallows them without water, hardly reacting to the bad taste.

He looks to the empty Maytag washer, its glass door swung open. He stares into the gaping hole, absently. He does a subtle doubletake on the washer's glass door. Three or four small dots of red are there. He moves closer, his jaw slackening. He looks down, finds more droplets on the floor. And something else.

He picks it up. A fingernail, singed, and with blood at its root. A soft squealing comes from his throat.

He looks around, opens doors: the hamper, cupboards. He checks cubby holes, under the sink. He opens the dryer door, shutting it off. Dead silence.

Andy grabs the top of the fold-away ironing board between the washer and dryer. It comes SLAMMING down with a CRASH. Her body tied, her knees to her chin, a rag stuffed into her mouth, Vicky stares up at him, her eyes open, glazed and dead. The nails are missing. All of them. A pair of pliers CLANKS to the floor. Andy touches Vicky, gets blood on his hands.

He makes a gagging noise and stumbles back, bumping into the dryer. Clothes begin to tumble and churn. He bites into his wrist and stifles a scream. A moment later, he remembers what brought him home.

ANDY
(unrestrained fear)
Charlie...!

EXT. MCGEE HOUSE

Andy stumbles out of his house, looking like a madman. His NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR, 42, is carrying groceries into her house. She notices Andy's odd demeanor.

NEIGHBOR

Hi, Andy.

(pause)

Are you all right?

He ignores her. She sees the blood on his hands as he paws his way into his car. His face is ashen. He PEELS OUT of the driveway. His frightened neighbor cautiously crosses toward his house.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Andy, hands in his pockets, looks insane as he hears Charlie's TEACHER, 30, explain. She seems terribly upset for him. In the b.g., children are heading for their school busses and bike racks.

TEACHER

They said there was a problem at home. We wouldn't have let her go, but Mister Callahan checked their identification. They're with H.E.W. They had a green government car...

(realizing she owes him more)

Uh... I saw them take the 90 East onramp. You might catch them.

Andy, distressed, removes a hand from his pocket and wipes his brow, streaking his forehead with blood. He is unaware of how he looks. The teacher tries to hide her fear of this insane and bloody man. She sees the blood on his hands. Now he notices that she notices. She backs away, but Andy doesn't have time to explain anything.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Andy's Volvo is blocking the departure of three school buses. The annoyed PRINCIPAL, 32, addresses the BUS DRIVER, 50, about the oddly parked vehicle.

PRINCIPAL

Whose car is this?

The driver shrugs. ANDY tears out of the school, running through children. He hops in his car, STARTS it up.

Andy's Volvo SCREECHES out of the lot, endangering the safety of the children walking home from school.

PRINCIPAL

Hey!!!

Charlie's Teacher runs out of the school and up to the Principal.

HIGHWAY ON-RAMP

Andy's tires smoke and SQUEAL as he passes a slow-moving truck and speeds onto the highway. The sign says TURNPIKE EAST.

INT. ANDY'S CAR

CLOSE ON speedometer: edging past eighty.

Andy keeps his eyes open. The road is not crowded. He weaves in and out, passing all traffic. Mumbles to himself.

ANDY

They can't speed... not with her
in the car... they'll get stopped.

EXT. I-90

Later. Farther up the highway. Andy comes up behind a slow-passing Cadillac in the fast lane. He is trapped behind three cars doing the speed limit. He lays on his HORN, barrels between two cars, leaving inches to spare. He floors the Volvo, taking it up to 95 as he leaves the angry drivers in the dust, his horn still BLARING.

EXT./INT. ANDY'S CAR I-90 - DAY

Still farther down. Andy whizzes by a sign marked REST AREA 500 FT. He glances over, going so fast that he passes the entrance.

He sees a green U.S. Government Issue sedan parked among the five cars there.

Andy swerves from the passing lane to the breakdown lane, overshooting the Rest Area considerably. He drives over a curb, cuts across the grass, and approaches the Rest Area from its Exit Ramp.

HIGHWAY REST AREA - DAY

Andy pulls in. He surveys the scene. No one in the government car. No sign of Charlie. No government types.

Andy, hands quivering, catches his breath, sees the blood on his hands, wipes them on his pants.

At a picnic table, a YOUNG COUPLE and their BABY are eating. A YOUNG MAN is in the nearby information booth, going over maps. An ELDERLY COUPLE drives off. All is serene... peaceful.

Suddenly, Charlie comes out of the men's room, flanked by the TWO AGENTS seen previously with Vicky. Charlie has been crying. The men lead her to a drinking fountain.

Andy, adrenalin pumping, takes a few deep breaths, exits his car. He steps behind the green car, just out of sight of the men and Charlie. He scans the area once more. Everyone is minding his own business.

Charlie and the two agents head for their car. Andy moves out from behind it into full view.

CHARLIE

Daddy!!

She tries to run for Andy, but FIRST AGENT grabs her, cradles her in his arm. The Young Couple with the Baby turn their attention. In an instant, FIRST AGENT has a .45 automatic pointed at Charlie's temple. The SECOND AGENT strolls casually in Andy's direction.

SECOND AGENT

Move away from the car.

CHARLIE

(crying)

Daddy!!

SECOND AGENT pulls a .357 magnum. Long barrelled.

The Young Man with his Wife and Baby at the picnic table gets up.

FIRST AGENT

Everything's fine. Finish your food.

YOUNG MARRIED MAN

What's going on...?

FIRST AGENT

Government business.

The Young Man's Wife grabs his arm and pulls him down. Andy looks at the 2ND Agent and says in a low, pleasant tone:

ANDY

That gun is much too hot to hold.

As ALL SOUND EFFECTS take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY and Andy's headache sets in, Second Agent gives a puzzled look before suddenly SCREAMING and dropping his gun. He dances around, holding his hand in pain.

The First Agent, holding a confused Charlie, stares at his colleague hopping up and down.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(in pain)

And you're blind.

First Agent SCREAMS, drops Charlie and his gun, grabs his eyes. Charlie runs to her suffering father, holds onto his legs. The Man in the information booth steps out to see what is going on. Second Agent sprints for Charlie. EFFECTS REKINDLE with each "push".

ANDY (CONT'D)

Go to sleep.

Second Agent stops in his tracks, closes his eyes, crumbles to his knees, pitches forward and bonks his head on the pavement. The Woman cradles her Baby in disbelief. Andy grabs his temples in pain.

CHARLIE

Daddy...

ANDY

Go to the car, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Is Mommy there?

ANDY

(pleading, not "pushing")
Just go to the car.

Charlie runs off. The blinded First Agent holds his eyes, SCREAMS.

MAN IN BOOTH

What the hell is this?

FIRST AGENT

(stumbling, blind, rabid)
My eyes! My eyes! What have you
done to my eyes, you son of a bitch!

Andy walks past the snoring Second Agent toward the Young Couple at the picnic table. The Young Woman snatches up her baby and jumps up from the table. The Young Married Man looks at Andy fearfully.

ANDY

(to both, "pushing")
None of this is very important.

The couple is relieved.

YOUNG MARRIED MAN
Well, thank God.

The Blind Agent careens around, calling out for his sleeping friend.

FIRST AGENT
Billy... Billy... I can't see!

The Young Married Woman smiles up at Andy, who is rubbing his temples. She offers him a plate.

YOUNG MARRIED WOMAN
Would you like some potato salad?

ANDY
No, thank you.

He heads for the man near the information booth. The Blind Agent stumbles over a trash can and lands on his sleeping friend.

FIRST AGENT
(feeling him)
Wake up! I can't see!

INFORMATION BOOTH

The Man by the booth addresses Andy, who looks in great pain.

MAN IN BOOTH
What is this, man? Is this a bust?

Andy "pushes", SOUND EFFECTS CLARITY rekindled, pain increased.

ANDY
Nah. Nothing happened.

MAN IN BOOTH
(accepting that)
Oh, well, I was just trying to find my way to Lincoln Falls. Do you know where I-95 West is?

PICNIC TABLE

The Blind Agent reaches the Young Marrieds at their table. Young Man reads. Young Woman breastfeeds her Baby, oblivious.

FIRST AGENT
Help me, someone. I'm blind.

YOUNG MAN
I'm afraid all we have is Travelers' Checks. I do give at the office.

Andy's car SCREECHES out of the rest area.

EXT. MOTEL SIX - NIGHT

Andy's Volvo is parked outside a room. The light is on inside.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Daddy...!

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Andy sits on his bed, staring into space. He is dishevelled, pained, tired, and in shock. Charlie, concerned, is trying to rouse him back to reality.

CHARLIE
(continuing)
Daddy... Why don't you talk to me, Daddy?

Eventually, Andy looks to his daughter. He just stares at her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Is your head better?

ANDY
(no voice, just mouthing)
(Yes.)

CHARLIE
Daddy, what happened? Who were those men? Why did they take me? Why were they crawling around like that on the ground?

Andy drifts back to reality. It hurts him. He realizes he has much to tell Charlie. He doesn't know if she's ready for it. As he pulls himself together for the ordeal, he embraces her.

ANDY
Honey...

He can't go on. He is too upset.

CHARLIE
How come you called me "Honey"?
That's what you call Mommy.
(frightened)
Where's Mommy?

Andy tries to hold strong, but it is impossible. His eyes fill with tears. This causes Charlie to cry, too.

Andy tries to stop.

ANDY

Hold me tight, Charlie. I have
to tell you a lot of things.

Charlie hugs him. He envelops her with his arms and body as he
tries to create a cocoon of support for what he is about to say.

ANDY (CONT'D)

We're very special people, Charlie.

CHARLIE

How come?

ANDY

Just listen to me for a minute, and
don't ask questions, okay? I'll
answer all your questions, but just
let me try to tell you this, because
I don't know if I can.

Charlie shuts up, listens.

ANDY (CONT'D)

You know the President?

CHARLIE

No.

ANDY

President of the United States?

CHARLIE

(vaguely)
Yeah...?

ANDY

Well, people work for him. They're
called the government.

CHARLIE

I heard of that.

ANDY

(kissing Charlie)
Good.

CHARLIE

What's the government?

ANDY

Government... they, well... they protect us.

(realizing that's wrong)

Charlie, I don't know what the hell they do... but they're in charge. They make the rules. We pay them... taxes...?

Andy realizes he's just confusing Charlie.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Forget all that. You just remember this for now: they make wars. You know what wars are?

CHARLIE

People fight.

ANDY

Yeah, people fight.

(pause)

Charlie... Mommy and I were in a... a kind of test...

Oh, shit, Charlie... I don't know how to tell you. Just hold on to me real tight, 'cause I'm gonna tell you something real sad, and I want you to know that I love you.

CHARLIE

(scared, holding tight)

What, Daddy?

ANDY

(with great difficulty)

Mommy is dead, Charlie.

CHARLIE

No!! NO!!!

(hysterical trance)

No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No!

Andy cannot comfort her. He starts to sweat. The room gets hot.

ANDY

Charlie, stop it...

Rage and sorrow well up and burst through.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Charlie... you're losing it!

Andy's face is red. Perspiration rolls off his skin. On the motel night stand, a Gideon Bible starts to smolder.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Charlie, the bathtub, the water!
Push it toward the water! Now!

She turns her head toward the open bathroom door. She SCREAMS.

FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT... a CRACKLING SOUND and a rush of STEAM from the doorway. Andy catches her as she falls backwards.

CHARLIE
(crying)
Daddy, Daddy, Daddy...

ANDY
It's all right, Charlie. It's
going to be all right... somehow.

Andy holds her and watches the steam and smoke come from the doorway.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

As if it had been baked in a firing kiln. The towels smolder on the racks. The porcelain tub is scorched and cracked. The sink is split. Water rushes from the broken pipes. The shower head has melted into a surrealistic metal droplet that hangs against the glowing hot tiles.

NEXT ROOM

Time has passed. Andy has Charlie tucked into the second bed in the room, the first rumpled one left abandoned. She lies propped on two pillows as he strokes her freshly-brushed hair with his hand. They are at relative peace for the moment.

CHARLIE
If you can make people do things...
why can't you make them stop
chasing us?

ANDY
It isn't that easy, Charlie. And
there are so many of them. We
just have to go far away.

Charlie's mind churns over a few more thoughts.

CHARLIE
Do you think you could make me
not make fires?

ANDY
I don't know.

Andy ponders the idea for a moment, intrigued at the thought.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I don't know what it would do to you. It might hurt you. I don't know.

CHARLIE

Well... it hurts me when I make fires.

(new tears)

It hurt me when I burned Mommy.

Charlie starts to cry again. She begins to sob.

ANDY

That wasn't your fault. And that is not why Mommy died. You remember that.

CHARLIE

(tears flowing)

Daddy, please make me never do it again. Use your trick to make me stop.

Andy comforts her, considers it, decides to give it a try.

ANDY

Okay, sit up.

Charlie obeys, wipes her tears.

ANDY (CONT'D)

You gotta look at me.

Charlie looks her father in the eye. She is very cute at the moment. He is taken with her innocent beauty, tries to shake off his emotions as he looks at her.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(trying to push)

No more fires, okay? You don't want to make them ever again.

CHARLIE

(unaffected)

Okay.

(pause)

How come I don't feel funny?

ANDY

(trying to concentrate)

Shut up. You're not supposed to. I am.

Andy intensifies his concentration as Charlie waits patiently. He looks at her for an extended moment. He is suffering strong emotional pangs.

CHARLIE
Daddy, what's wrong?

Andy says nothing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Daddy...?

Andy pitches forward, hugs Charlie with great strength.

ANDY
I can't...
(pause)
Charlie, I can't.

She comforts him with her little arms around him. He strokes her hair.

INT. D.S.I. HOSPITAL WARD

Behind a door with a thick glass window, the Blind Agent sits staring into nowhere. In the foreground, Cap and Rahv bring an unrevealed VISITOR to the window.

CAP
There's nothing organic wrong
with his eyes.

RAHV
He just thinks he's blind.

They walk into the Agent's room.

CAP
Howard, we have somebody we
want you to meet. Helen's here,
too.

BLIND AGENT
(sedated)
Oh, hi.

RAHV
Howard, this man also had an encounter
with Andrew McGee. He knows a lot about
this kind of thing. He's been working
with Defense for a long while, and he
also knows Mister McGee personally. He's
coming to work for us, and he thinks he
can help you.

As the Blind Agent extends his hand for a handshake, CAMERA REVEALS the Visitor to be QUINCEY.

QUINCEY
(shaking hands)
Hi, Howard. I'm Quincey Tremont.

EXT. CLEVELAND, OHIO - BUSY STREET - DAY

Andy's Volvo is stalled in traffic, steam billowing from its radiator. HORNS BLARE in the traffic jam which is forming. SUPERIMPOSE:

CLEVELAND

INT. VOLVO

Both Andy and Charlie are irritable.

CHARLIE
Don't blame it on me!

ANDY
Stay here.

He hops out of the car.

CHARLIE
Where are you going?

Andy indicates a nearby gas station.

ANDY
To get some water. I'll be right back. Lock the door.

Charlie obeys, pouting. Andy crosses the street.

EXT. TRAFFIC JAM & GAS STATION

Andy reaches the fueling area, crosses to the gas station office. All ATTENDANTS are busy with CUSTOMERS. One is RINGING up a sale. Andy is about to address him when he sees his and Charlie's photos on the front page of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, stacked in a newspaper vending machine. The headline reads: PROFESSOR SOUGHT IN WIFE'S SLAYING. FEAR CHILD KIDNAPPED.

Andy's head is spinning. He backs away from the cash register.

ATTENDANT
What'll it be?

But Andy just stumbles away. The Attendant shrugs, begins to do something else, takes another look at Andy before he is gone, leans to the newspaper on his desk. He says nothing, but picks up the phone, dials "0".

AT THE VOLVO

Andy KNOCKS on Charlie's window.

ANDY

Come on!

CHARLIE

(from inside)

Where we going?

ANDY

(frantic)

Just open the door. Come on!

Charlie unlocks the door. Andy tears the door open, grabs Charlie, pulls her along with him through a line of angry drivers detouring around the Volvo. One DRIVER leans out his window after just missing Andy and Charlie.

DRIVER

Watch it, fella!

ANDY

(to the driver)

Get lost.

ALL SOUND EFFECTS take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY, Andy's headache sets in.

DRIVER

(pleasantly)

Okay.

Driver gets out of his car and disappears somewhere in the traffic. Charlie keeps watching the man as Andy tries to pull her away. Now both lanes are blocked. A POLICE car pulls up. SOMEONE points in the direction of Andy and Charlie as they disappear around a corner.

The POLICEMAN sees them, gets on his radio.

AROUND THE CORNER

Andy and Charlie are on the run. Charlie is much too slow for her father as he leads her through heavy pedestrian traffic. He spies a taxi ahead. A BLACK MAN is about to get in. Andy steps ahead of him.

ANDY
 ("pushing" Black Man)
 You don't want this cab.

The Black Man takes his hand from the door handle. Andy and Charlie enter the cab.

CABBIE
 Where to?

ANDY
 The airport. On the double.

The taxi pulls out into heavy stop-and-go traffic.

Back at the corner, the Policeman writes the taxi's license number down.

INT. CAB - LATER

The cab makes its way along an expressway toward the airport, passing AIRPORT signs on the way. The taxi RADIO starts to CRACKLE.

CAB RADIO (V.O.)
 Number 8983 give location and
 destin...

ANDY
 ("pushing" via the
 rear-view mirror)
 Turn it off.

The Cabbie complies. Andy grimaces, rubbing his forehead.

INT./EXT. TRAVELING SHOT - LATER

The taxi on the expressway. Andy looks bleary-eyed out the side window. Charlie stares out the rear window.

ANDY
 Pull off here a second.

CABBIE
 Anything you say.

EXT. TWENTY-FOUR HOUR AUTOMATED BANK TELLER

Andy and Charlie stand in front of the all night automatic teller. The Driver waits in the cab. Andy tries his card. Negative response from the machine.

ANDY
They've closed our account.

CHARLIE
Those assholes.

ANDY
Don't talk like that.

They walk back to the cab, Andy using Charlie as a cane. They get in. Andy pulls out his last crinkled one dollar bill. He smooths it out.

ANDY (CONT'D)
I've changed my mind.

CABBIE
Now what?

ANDY
(inventing)
Ah, Albany. Take us to the
Albany Airport.

CABBIE
Albany what? New York? What are
you, some kind of nut? I can't...

Andy holds out the one dollar bill, "pushes", SOUND EFFECTS GOING
CLEAR AND BRILLIANT.

ANDY
Here's a thousand dollar bill.

The driver examines it. He smiles back at Andy.

CABBIE
Albany Airport it is, Santa Claus.

He turns off his meter. Andy, reeling in pain, closes his bloodshot
eyes and flops back in his seat.

INT. ALBANY AIRPORT - NIGHT

The place is sparsely populated with night TRAVELLERS and a
SKELETON CREW of employees.

Andy and Charlie make themselves as comfortable as possible in
the plastic airport seats.

A stranded G.I. SNORES not far from them and even this noise
bothers Andy.

Andy whispers in Charlie's ear.

CHARLIE

Do I have to?

ANDY

(desperate)

I'm all used up.

CHARLIE

But you said...

ANDY

I know what I said.

Andy pops several more aspirin into his mouth, swallows hard.

ANDY (CONT'D)

But we need money, Charlie, or
we can't go anywhere.

(pause)

Understand?

Charlie nods, reluctantly.

EXT. NEW YORK STATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Cabbie is pulled over on the side of the road. A New York STATE TROOPER is parked ahead of the cab. A pale green U.S. Government Issue Sedan is parked behind it. Traffic passes during the scene. The Cabbie stands beside his vehicle, being questioned under the harsh beam of a flashlight. He is flanked by the Trooper and two Government Agents (AGENTS #3 and #4). He is being shown photos fo Charlie and Andy.

CABBIE

Yeah, that's them.

INT. ALBANY AIRPORT

Charlie approaches a bank of telephone booths. None is occupied. She enters the first booth, picks up the receiver, mimes putting a coin into the slot. She waits. She has an old brown paper bag.

CHARLIE

Hello, Grandma... this is Charlie.
We're in Albany.

She checks to see that no one is paying attention. She bites down on her lower lip and makes a little grunting noise. The plastic around the change box begins to melt. A little smoke rises. A tide of silver coins falls into the shopping bag. She is off to the next booth.

WIDER ANGLE - NEXT BOOTH

The sleeping G.I. can be seen in the foreground as Charlie repeats the process, smoke rising and change pouring into her shopping bag. She moves on to the next booth.

WAITING AREA

Charlie continues her pillaging of the phone booths. The G.I. continues sleeping. Andy sits trying to look casual as his daughter commits her felony. He is in pain and very tired.

Nearby, a BLACK WOMAN is buying flight insurance. A ladies' room is adjacent to the waiting area, and TWO WOMEN ENTER it.

After a moment of quiet, the G.I.'s feet begin smoking. He stirs in his sleep. No one else notices. A moment later, the smoke is quite plentiful. The G.I. awakens, stares down at his feet just in time to see them burst into flame. He SHOUTS, jumps up, runs into the ladies' room, leaving a trail of smoke behind him. The woman buying flight insurance looks on curiously. A YOUNG WOMAN comes out of the ladies room as the G.I. runs in. She is still adjusting her skirt. She looks back at the strange incident, walks on.

EXT. RUNWAY - ALBANY AIRPORT - NIGHT

An Army helicopter lands. SEVERAL GOVERNMENT AGENTS get off. They are met by Airport Security.

EXT. TERMINAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Charlie and Andy race across the parking lot, cutting in front of a car as it approaches the parking lot toll booth. The car screeches on its brakes. The PARKING LOT ATTENDANT, 21, leans out of his booth, watches Andy and Charlie disappear up an nearby embankment. He takes the driver's money.

CHARLIE

(up the bank, tearful)
I didn't mean to burn him...

ANDY

I know. Just keep climbing.

Charlie turns, faces her suffering father, holds out her hand to him in childlike sympathy.

CHARLIE

Doesn't this hurt you, Daddy?

ANDY
I'm okay, Charles.

She smiles weakly at his teasing, happy that he can at least still do that.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL

The G.I. is nodding his head to the Government Agents. He holds his burnt shoes in his hands. In the b.g., several more Agents fan out in the terminal. The place is being turned upside down in the search for father and daughter.

EXT. EMBANKMENT - NIGHT

Andy and Charlie are higher up and further along the embankment between two highways. Charlie loses her footing and falls. Andy tries to grab her, falls with her. It is a long and rough fall to the road below. Charlie somersaults and stops at the highway, narrowly missed by a Greyhound bus.

ANDY
Charlie!

In great pain, Andy slides down the remainder of the incline to hurriedly pull Charlie out of danger. He looks her over, ascertains that she has only skinned her elbows and knees.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

CHARLIE
I wish I was dead.

ANDY
(nose to nose)
Never say that. Never!

He pulls himself together, stands at the side of the road, and sticks out his thumb at the next passing car. It doesn't stop.

EXT. ALBANY AIRPORT - PARKING LOT

Several Agents scurry across the parking lot. A JET ROARS off, overhead. SUPERVISING AGENT BATES, 37, is talking with the Parking Lot Attendant in his toll booth.

ATTENDANT
Yeah. He dragged the little girl right in front of a car. They almost got hit. They went up there.

He points toward the embankment.

EXT. SLUMBERLAND MOTEL - NIGHT

A large tractor-trailer rig stops along the highway. Andy and Charlie get out and wave thank you to the driver. The rig slowly starts to pull away. There is a VACANCY sign at the motel.

INT. OFFICE - SLUMBERLAND MOTEL - NIGHT

Andy finishes filling out the motel registration for the MOTEL OWNER. Charlie is absent.

MOTEL OWNER
Seventeen dollars, then.

ANDY
I hope you don't mind small change.

The Owner eyes Andy askance as he piles out his quarters, dimes, and nickels. Andy can't help but notice the Owner's incredulity.

ANDY (CONT'D)
(a little flustered)
Sorry about this. I work for
a vending machine company.
I've just cashed in.

MOTEL OWNER
Am I glad to hear that! I'll
give ya five bucks off if you can
fix that damn cigarette machine.
Hasn't worked in two weeks.

Andy tries to hide his panic as he walks over to the machine, examines it, tries to think of what to say. He hits it.

ANDY
(after a moment, bluffing)
Oh, yeah.
(embarrassed pause)
I'll need my tools. Maybe in
the morning.

The Owner nods, and Andy escapes the office, issuing a sigh of relief.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Andy walks down the gravel drive to the end unit. The light in the office TURNS OFF. He approaches a hedge bordering a lawn.

ANDY
(whispering)
Charlie.

No answer. He begins to panic until he detects the SOUND OF SNORING beyond the hedge. Charlie is fast asleep on the lawn. He picks her up.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

SOUND of a shower running. Andy sits on the edge of the bed. He presses his hands into his eye sockets. The shower is turned off.

ANDY

Charlie.

She enters from the bathroom, her hair wrapped in a towel. She dries herself with another one.

CHARLIE

Hi.

ANDY

I didn't know you could work a shower by yourself.

CHARLIE

(scolding)

Dad... I'm eight years old...

(picks up her dirty clothes)
Yuk.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Mine are just as bad.

Charlie starts getting dressed.

ANDY (CONT'D)

You hungry?

CHARLIE

Starved. Can we get blueberry pancakes?

ANDY

I'll see what I can do.

CHARLIE

How come your eye looks funny?

BATHROOM MIRROR

Andy wipes the steam from the mirror. His left eyelid and cheek droop dramatically. The left pupil is larger than the right. He examines his face with his hand, feeling, prodding. Charlie enters.

CHARLIE

Daddy, are you sure you're okay?

ANDY

Fine! I was just thinking how much I need a shave.

He picks her up and rubs his scratchy face against hers. She giggles and kicks in the air.

CHARLIE

Oh, gross.

He gives her a big kiss.

EXT. MARKET - HASTINGS GLEN - DAY

The market is situated in the middle of the main drag. A RED FARM TRUCK is parked by a green U.S. Government sedan. A hippie from a bygone era, IRV MANDERS, unloads pumpkins from the truck and hands them to the MARKET MANAGER. There are other strange vehicles around.

MANDERS

What's all this?

MANAGER

Federal agents.

Manders looks curious, yet disapproving. TWO AGENTS approach him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Beyond the Slumberland Motel, Charlie and Andy walk down a hill. The motel sign disappears in the background.

CHARLIE

I feel nervous.

ANDY

(with false bravado)

We're way ahead of 'em, Honey.

This time, Charlie doesn't mind him calling her that. CAMERA RISES to reveal (over the hill) a green Government car driving into the Slumberland Motel parking lot. It is followed by the Red Farm Truck, which tailgates for a moment until the green car pulls off. The truck continues on.

As it approaches Charlie and Andy, they both stick out their thumbs. The truck slows down. A local Heating Oil Truck comes the other way.

INT. SLUMBERLAND MOTEL - DAY

The Motel Owner addresses a Government Agent.

OWNER

That's him. But there was no girl with him. Bastard was s'posed to fix my machine...

INT. D.S.I. COMPOUND - DAY

Cap, Rahv, and Quincey confer. Cap gets off the phone.

CAP

They should have them by lunch time.

QUINCEY

(holding sleek, black goggles)
Did you issue these?

CAP

(nodding)
Damn things are expensive.

QUINCEY

I hope they'll use 'em. If they don't, McGee'll tell 'em to go jump in a lake, and you'll have a dredging operation on your hands.

INT. RED FARM TRUCK

Charlie sits between Manders and Andy.

MANDERS

Where you two headed?

(simultaneously)

ANDY
Rochester.CHARLIE
Canada.

Andy gives Charlie a dirty look. Charlie clams up.

ANDY (CONT'D)

First Rochester... eventually
Canada.

MANDERS

I c'n get ya 'bout twenty miles
closer.

(long pause)

I used to hitch, y'know...?

Andy nods politely.

MANDERS (CONT'D)

Rock festivals, mainly. Those
were the days, weren't they?

(pause)

Times have changed.

(pause)

Hitchin's kinda dangerous now,
mostly.

ANDY

Sometimes you don't have a choice.

CHARLIE

My Dad's out of work.

ANDY

(wanting to kick Charlie)

Hey, that's private.

MANDERS

That's cool. The way things are
goin', 'most everybody's out of
work. Me and my old lady went
back to the land.Charlie is entranced by the beauty of the countryside. She sees
some horses.

CHARLIE

Look, Daddy.

MANDERS

You folks hungry?

CHARLIE
We're starved!

ANDY
(reproachfully)
Charlie...

MANDERS
Why not come home with me and
have some lunch. Norma's baking
today. You like muffins?

Charlie looks pleadingly to Andy, letting him make the decision.

ANDY
She loves muffins.
(nuzzling her)
She is a muffin.

Charlie giggles. Manders is satisfied. Andy relaxes a bit. The red truck continues down the road, makes a turn onto a dirt road.

EXT. MAIN ROAD - NEAR TOWN

A blockade is being set up by the State Police. Government sedans are parked in the area. A few cars and trucks are being stopped, then allowed to pass. The TRUCK DRIVER of the Heating Oil Truck is being questioned by AGENT BATES.

TRUCK DRIVER
Yeah... I saw Irv Manders stop
for somebody. Didn't get too
close a look. Mighta been two
of 'em.

BATES
Who is Irv Manders?

TRUCK DRIVER
Oh, don't worry about him. He's
a nice fella. Lives up on the
Ox Bow.

EXT. MANDERS' FARM

The white farmhouse has a prominent front porch. There is a vegetable garden to the side of the house. In front is a chicken coop and a yard housing farm animals and several horses. The stump of a large tree is used as a chopping block. An axe is embedded in it. NORMA MANDERS, attractive in an earthy way, enjoys watching Charlie down a whole glass of milk in one long draught before continuing to eat her steaming hot muffin.

NORMA
(lovingly)
You'll get a tummy ache if you
eat too fast.

CHARLIE
(mouth full)
Mmmf. I know.

Charlie doesn't slow down a bit.

Irv and Andy walk in the front yard. Each man carries an open beer
can as Andy gets the royal tour.

ANDY
(noting the axe)
You chop your own wood?

MANDERS
Eight cords a year. I sell
about three. Pretty efficient
house.

The two men look back toward the house. Norma is walking into the
house with Charlie by the hand. They seem to be getting along fine.
Andy and Irv notice.

MANDERS
Norma loves kids... It's the only
thing on this place we haven't been
able to raise.

Andy sips his beer, sits on a large tree stump.

ANDY
This must be the life...

MANDERS
Just how much trouble you in?

Andy, taken aback, just looks at him.

MANDERS (CONT'D)
You got a lot of people looking
for you. They ask a lot of
questions and give absolutely
no answers.

ANDY
Why'd you pick us up?

MANDERS
'Cause I know they're a bunch of
assholes. Damn government bureaucrats.
They're nothin' but glorified welfare
recipients. Takes ten of 'em to do one
man's job, and even then they fuck it up.

Andy gives a slight laugh.

MANDERS (CONT'D)
Besides... I'm nosy.
(pause)
What do they want you for?

ANDY
Research.

MANDERS
What kind of research?

ANDY
You know the Shop? D.S.I.?

Blank look from Manders.

ANDY
Science branch of the C.I.A.

MANDERS
(impressed)
No shit.

ANDY
Yeah.
(thinks a moment)
Listen, I've said too much already.

MANDERS
Look, man. I love this country.
That's why I fought in Nam. But
I know right from wrong, which
is why I got my ass out of that
fuckin' war. I know what it's
like to be on the run. You can
trust me.

Andy prepares to talk seriously.

ANDY
(with difficulty)
They killed my wife.
(pause)
We were in an experiment back in
college. You know, we needed the
money... government sponsored.
Heh. We thought it was harmless.
Turns out the Defense Department
was behind it.

MANDERS
Those bastards never quit.
(bitterly)
If they stopped "defending"
us, we'd be safe.

ANDY

I wish they'd just stop chasing us.

MANDERS

Why do they want you?

ANDY

They don't. They want Charlie.

MANDERS

What do they want with a little girl?

They watch Charlie and Norma petting a horse.

ANDY

Well...

(a little ashamed)

I guess you could call her a mutant.

MANDERS

That doesn't sound too cool.

ANDY

The drugs we took in that experiment
somehow got passed on to her, y'know,
genetically...?

Manders looks puzzled. Norma leads Charlie on the horse, in the b.g.

ANDY (CONT'D)

She lights fires.

MANDERS

Pyromaniac?

ANDY

(anticipating disbelief)

Unh, she could light your pipe...
just by thinking about it.

MANDERS

(polite disbelief)

Heh.

ANDY

But she's not really good at controlling
it, so while she's lighting your pipe,
she might also burn up your house, your
barn, and your front yard.

Irv finishes his beer and looks at Andy in that peculiar, cautious
way you look at people you suspect of madness.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Sounds pretty nutty, doesn't it?

MANDERS

(trying to hide his conviction
that Andy is certifiably insane)
Well... I wouldn't necessarily say "nutty".

ANDY

Crazy, maybe?

MANDERS

(after a long pause)
Have you tried to get professional help?

Andy's spirits are about to sink, but he is distracted by a terrified SHRIEK from Charlie. He looks to the crest of a hill, sees Charlie clamoring off the Manders' horse and running to him. Norma follows behind, not knowing what is wrong.

CHARLIE

Daddy!
(runs)
They're coming!

Charlie crashes into Andy, throws herself against his legs, hugs his waist, buries her head in his side. Both she and Andy are frightened.

Norma approaches with the horse. Manders looks worried.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(muffled into her father)
Daddy, I'm scared.

Through the trees, they HEAR VEHICLES APPROACHING, see them winding up the dirt road toward the house.

MANDERS

Norma, get my shotgun. You two
better get inside right now.

Charlie and Andy hurry into the house. Norma tethers the horse safely and loosely to one side of the house, hurries in after them.

Irv stands to meet the first of several Government Vehicles. He walks toward them as would any proud landowner facing down a band of trespassers. Irv is pissed.

A moment later, the SUPERVISING AGENT, BATES, gets out of the first vehicle. He wears his special goggles. They are opaque and black. Otherwise, he and the others are dressed as conventional low key government employees.

MANDERS (CONT'D)

(to himself)
What the...?

BATES
Mister Manders?

MANDERS
(referring to the goggles)
Kinda early for Halloween, isn't it?

BATES
We're here for the McGees, Mister
Manders. We saw them go inside.
Let's not make this unpleasant.

INT. MANDERS' KITCHEN

Norma is loading Irv's shotgun. Charlie is huddled with Andy.
They peer out the window.

ANDY
You won't need that gun, Missus
Manders.

Norma is confused. Andy holds Charlie by the shoulders.

ANDY (CONT'D)
(to Charlie)
Charlie, it's too late to run.

CHARLIE
Don't let them take me, Daddy.

ANDY
You can stop them.

CHARLIE
(mixed up)
But... that's bad. You said it
was bad... to do to people...?

ANDY
Those are the people who killed
Mommy.

Charlie begins to seethe. It grows warm in the kitchen. Norma
and Andy begin to sweat profusely.

ANDY (CONT'D)
I'll always love you, Baby... no
matter what happens.

EXT. FRONT YARD

More agents have fanned out around Manders. It is an extremely
one-sided confrontation, but Manders holds his ground, unarmed
against the Agents' guns and goggles.

MANDERS

You people are from this D.S.I.
bunch, aren't you?

Bates looks toward the house. He is disappointed that Manders knows.

BATES

Now you're implicating innocent
people, McGee.

MANDERS

This is my property, buddy. You
wanna talk to somebody, talk to
me. Any of you regular police?

Several men inch toward the porch.

BATES

We are government agents, sir.
These two are wanted for questioning.
Nothing more.

MANDERS

Then you get a cop with a warrant.
Until then, you're trespassing.

BATES

(impatient)
We don't need a warrant, sir.

MANDERS

Look, fella. I pay your lousy
salary. Now you answer me a few
questions. Who's your supervisor?

INT. MANDERS' KITCHEN

Andy has been watching Manders' losing battle.

ANDY

This isn't gonna work.

EXT. FRONT YARD

Norma darts out of the house.

NORMA

Irv, come on inside.

Charlie can be seen running to the kitchen door. Andy can be seen
following her. They remain inside.

ANDY
(through screen door)
Do what Norma says, Irv.

CHARLIE
(bursting through door,
to Agents)
You better get out of here!

MANDERS
What the hell is this, Nazi Germany?

Andy steps out onto the porch.

ANDY
You fellas better beat it. You
don't understand what can happen.

BATES
We're ready to talk it out, if
you are.

ANDY
(stepping out farther)
Like you did with my wife.

MANDERS
Look out!

Two Agents jump the railing of the porch. They point their guns
at Andy.

AGENT
Freeze. Hands over your heads.

Other Government Men move toward the porch.

Charlie is afraid. Her eyes widen. She watches two men approach her father with handcuffs. She seems to fall under a strange trancelike state, and WAVES OF HEAT shimmer around her. Things are getting hot. Suddenly, a porch railing ignites into flames. A second later, a patch of shingles goes up on the roof. A floor-board is next. In rapid succession, as the heat shield increases in intensity around Charlie, a broomhandle ignites, a plastic milk-carton container melts into a puddle, and a whole section of farmhouse siding goes up. Of the Two Agents approaching Andy with guns and handcuffs, the more distant one loses control of his gun. It misfires. The Closer Agent turns at the sound, and we see the back of his head BURST into flames. Charlie is unaware of the power she is wielding as she drifts further into her altered state of mind, heat shimmering around her.

Irv Manders goes for his shotgun, reaching for Norma. Bates panics, pulls his trigger, sending a bullet into Manders' arm. Charlie wheels and fixes her strange gaze on Bates.

BATES
(sweating)
No. Don't. Please.

But everything is happening much too fast for anyone to control. Charlie tries to look away from Bates, fixes her eyes on the ground before her. The dirt ignites, and a trench of fire races across the dooryard in a single straight line, as if a train of gunpowder had been lain to the feet of Agent Bates. The conflagration reaches him in an instant. His clothing goes first. The flesh follows. For a horrible instant, a dehydrated skeleton remains before crumbling to the ground in a pile of ashes. All witnesses recoil in horror.

Agents are running to their cars. The horse bolts away, breaking its tether. Irv and Norma scurry. Andy is left with Charlie, portions of the house now exploding, whole rooms igniting instantaneously, trees defoliated in a hurricane of fire just before igniting. Andy tries to get closer to Charlie. He looks at the waves of heat surrounding her, cannot get closer.

An explosion turns his attention to the first in a line of Government Cars. It has exploded, tossing its frightful occupants into the air. Immediately, Agents pour out of the other cars, most making it just before the gas tanks explode in quick succession.

ANDY
Charlie! Stop!

She seems to be in the throes of a bizarre seizure. Andy's words bring her back, cause her to turn to him... on him...? She stares at him.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Charlie. No. It's me...

He begins to sweat, his hair begins to smolder. He rushes to her, SLAPS her hard in the face. Her fury builds up, and is followed by the immediate EXPLOSION of the whole top floor of the farmhouse, windows blowing out simultaneously, glass pouring down into the yard like molten hailstones. But the spell is broken.

CHARLIE
Dadeeee...!

Andy sweeps her up into his arms, and she faints.

ANDY
Baby...

He runs with her, away from the house just as the remains of the structure explode and crumble into a fiery whirlwind of rubble.

Andy puts Charlie down, lies sheltering her from the ensuing firestorm.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Two Agents run through the trees. One falls, wrenching his ankle. He gets up again, runs, despite the injury. They don't stop or look back at the SOUND of an explosion.

EXT. MANDERS' FARM

Propane tank explodes. The farmhouse is a torch. The burnt cars are engulfed in flames. Charred bones are scattered.

THE SHED

far from the burning house, has not caught fire. Norma Manders, numb, expressionless, kneels beside her wounded husband, cradling his head.

Andy backs out of the shed in a four-wheel drive jeep. Charlie, in a daze, sits in the passenger seat.

ANDY

(to Irv)

I'm sorry. We'll make it up to you somehow.

IRV

(in pain)

Watch third gear. It sticks.

EXT. WOODED ROAD - DUSK

Andy and Charlie are bouncing in the jeep, travelling up a steep incline. The road is barely wide enough to accomodate the wheel base. An extremely rough jolt shakes Charlie nearly out of her trance. Andy notices.

ANDY

Sorry. This is the only road they don't know about.

The jeep makes it over the crest.

EXT. MANDERS' FARM - DUSK

TWO AGENTS get out of their green car at the shed. Behind them, a contingent of pale green government vehicles, including fire-fighting pumpers, controls the spread of the fire. No civilians here, except Irv and Norma, who sit propped against the shed, watching what was once their farm smolder and drift into the blackened air. The Agents approach Irv and Norma.

AGENT
Mister and Missus Manders?

IRV
That's right. Who are you?

CAMERA DRIFTS UP with the rising smoke as we HEAR FOUR SHOTS FIRED from pistols. A piece of soot ignites in the dusky sky, then fades.

INT. JEEP - DRIVING SHOT - NIGHT

Charlie sleeps while a terribly weary Andy struggles to stay awake. They are on a paved road. Hardly any traffic. Andy tries the radio, gets STATIC. He looks to Charlie, watches her sleep, envies her.

EXT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

The sun is rising, shedding orange hues over the near-empty parking lot of the fast food restaurant. After a moment, the Jeep emerges from the Drive-thru lane.

Andy and Charlie, both zombies from fatigue and emotional exhaustion, try their best to get the food down while Andy drives. Charlie is cold. Andy tries to wrap her in a greasy blanket. We see their breath. The Jeep disappears behind an empty schoolbus.

EXT. PAVED COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A particularly scenic section of two-lane blacktop. It is snowing. Andy and Charlie pass a sign reading WELCOME TO NEW HAMPSHIRE. The Jeep crosses an old covered bridge.

Crossing the noisy wooden-slatted bridge, Andy looks over to Charlie, smiles.

The Jeep hits pavement again. Around them, the snowfall is beginning to accumulate over the beautiful New Hampshire countryside.

EXT./INT. GEORGETOWN FRENCH RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

It is warm and sunny here, the ambience of the restaurant elegant and intimate. Cap and Rahv sit on the patio, picking over their chicken salad plates and sipping white wine. Cap is dressed casually. Rahv looks specially outfitted for this lunch. Cap is somewhat distracted by her neckline and hemline. They talk in pleasant tones, despite their subject matter, avoiding any attention from surrounding tables in this elite Washington environment.

CAP
(sipping wine)
They want the father killed.
(pause)
Fairchild even wants the girl
neutralized.

RAHV
(chewing daintily)
We can't allow that.

CAP
Then we have to be forceful, and
we must be united.
(his eyes scan her knees)
The little girl's more dangerous
than they anticipated. The generals
are afraid McGee's going to reeducate
her. The more we pursue them, the
more we're forcing him to force her
to use that Godawful power of hers.
Do you want your pickle?

Rahv thinks hard as she hands him the pickle off her plate.

RAHV
We must keep them both alive.

CAP
This is no time for sentiment, Helen.

RAHV
I'm talking about twenty years of
research.

CAP
This isn't the science fair. That
little girl...
(lowers his voice)
That little girl could represent
the equivalent of a nuclear bomb.

RAHV
That's an overstatement.

CAP
Is it? Charlene McGee's particular
talent is linked to her pituitary
gland, a gland nearly dormant in a
child her age. What happens at
puberty? What happens when that
gland becomes the most powerful
force in her body? Couple that with
some expert survival training by her
daddy... who knows what we have?!

RAHV

That's why we can't kill them, Cap.
(she lets more of her leg
show)

I need them alive for my first round
of tests. After that, if they must
die, let's do it humanely... and in
such a way that we can preserve their
body parts for long-term laboratory
analyses.

CAP

(becoming infatuated with Rahv)
That sounds... constructive.

RAHV

Will you help me?
(pause, suggestively)
I can't do it alone.

Cap takes Rahv's nearest hand, caresses it. She lets him, her face
becoming flushed with warmth. Their eyes lock in harmony.

CAP

You can count on me.

He wants to kiss her, but doesn't quite dare.

RAHV

First we have to catch them.

EXT. NEW HAMPSHIRE WOODS - DUSK

Two human figures dot a stark white wooded landscape. The abandoned
Jeep sits in the foreground, intentionally ditched in an out-of-the-
way snow bank.

Andy plants his boot on the surface of virgin snow, sinks in about ten
inches. His other foot comes down, sinks in. He is extremely
exhausted as he carries two shopping bags of supplies further into the
forest. Charlie, carrying her own shopping bag, is walking in her
father's footsteps, having trouble as she disappears up to her knees,
falls farther and farther behind. She is tired and frustrated.

CHARLIE

Daddy...!

Andy wearily turns, looks back to his little girl, wants to cry from
exhaustion.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You're taking too big steps!

(pause)

I don't know why you had to get
a cabin so far away.

ANDY

(barely coherent from fatigue)
I told the guy we didn't want to be
bothered.

CHARLIE

(near tears)
Well this bothers me... alot!

Andy, weary, nevertheless doubles back, heaves a sigh, picks up his daughter, nestling her between his two shopping bags. He tries walking with her like this, but a bag rips, spewing canned goods into the snow. Now Andy is as frustrated as Charlie.

ANDY

Dammit!

Charlie just looks at her father as though everything is her fault.

CHARLIE

Sorry I'm little.

ANDY

(touched)
I'm not.

He lets the rest of his goods drop into the snow, gives Charlie a big hug.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

It is very dark inside. Andy screws a new bulb into an overhead socket, the dim light revealing the cabin as small and tidy. Charlie starts unpacking bags. Andy crumples an old newspaper, lights it, tosses it into the fireplace. It goes out.

A MOMENT LATER

Andy comes in from outside and lays a bundle of wet logs near the fireplace.

LINEN CLOSET

Blankets, sheets, towels are pulled out by Andy, handed to Charlie.

ANDY

Luck of the Irish.

CHARLIE

We're not Irish.

ANDY

Today, we're Irish. Now let's
get you out of those wet clothes.

LIVING ROOM

Charlie is bundled up but still cold. She lies on the couch watching Andy try to get the fireplace going. The wet logs make it difficult. Weak, hurting, shivering, almost ready to pass out, Andy gives up. He turns to her, forces a smile, tries to hide how badly he feels.

ANDY

We'll just have to snuggle up
real close tonight.

He wobbles forward and stumbles onto the couch, beside Charlie. He is almost immediately asleep. She looks to him.

CHARLIE

Dad?

ANDY

Shhhhh, hon...

She sits up. For a moment, she ponders the coldness of the cabin, sees Andy's breath escape as he sleeps. She looks to the dormant fireplace.

POOF. The fireplace crackles with flame. She gets up.

KITCHEN

Charlie passes through. On the table is a candle. Its wick lights.

Holding the candle, she enters the pantry. Several canned goods on the shelves. She crinkles her nose and selects one.

Fighting with a can opener, she finally gets the lid off. She pours the contents into a pot on the stove. She turns on the gas. Nothing. She is in no mood for this. She shuts off the gas, does it her way. Within a second, the soup starts to boil.

Now she pours the hot and steamy soup into newly found bowls. She tastes it. Not bad.

COUCH

She nudges her Dad. She brings the soup close to his nose. He stirs, sniffs. His eyes open.

CHARLIE

Hungry? Made it myself.

A SHORT WHILE LATER

The empty soup bowls rest on a table. Andy and Charlie sit snuggled on the couch in front of the roaring fireplace. They are both warm and cozy. Andy sips Jack Daniels, enjoying it more than he's ever enjoyed a drink in his life. Charlie unwraps her tenth Hersey's chocolate kiss, deposits the wrapper with its counterparts on the end table, pops the candy into her mouth. Contentment on both faces as they stare at the fire.

After a moment, Andy turns and admires his little girl. A moment later, Charlie catches him looking.

CHARLIE

What?

ANDY

You look like your mother.

CHARLIE

(fighting tears)

I'm not gonna cry.

ANDY

(fighting tears)

Me, neither.

They just look at each other as tears roll down their cheeks.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A FROZEN MOUNTAIN STREAM - DAY

Immaculate crystals of ice hang from snow-laden pines. The sun shines through them with a magnified brilliance. Refracted light colors the otherwise stark white wilderness with subtle hues of purple and yellow as Andy and Charlie make their way along the bank of a frozen mountain stream. The water can be heard running well below the snow-covered ice sheets hiding the stream. Andy tentatively tries his footing on the ice, finds it safe. Charlie follows him across the stream. He tries to reach for her hand, to steady her climb across the ice. He slips, surprising them both as his efforts to maintain his balance send a boot through the ice and into the swift-flowing stream below. The fissure widens before Charlie can escape, and both father and daughter plummet waist deep into the stream. Andy pulls them out.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Charlie lies in bed as Andy takes the thermometer out of her mouth, reads it. He seems to find it normal, kisses her on the forehead.

EXT. POND - DAY

Frozen over. Beautiful. Snow-covered pines. White sky. Andy makes his way across the pond toward a village at the far side. He walks briskly, alone.

EXT. BRADFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE - VILLAGE CENTER - DAY

An extremely small town, even for New Hampshire. A UPS truck sits in front of the only row of stores in town. Most prominent is the Bradford General Store. The UPS DRIVER hurries out of the store with typical UPS haste, climbs into his truck, and pulls out. Andy notices the truck as he walks toward the General Store, enters.

INT. GENERAL STORE

Several OLD TIMERS sit around a wood stove, keeping their daily vigil on the goings-on-about-town. One Old Timer is preoccupied with cleaning his pipe. Another seems to have found something mildly interesting about the customer paying for his goods at the cash register. That customer is Andy. What is interesting is that he is paying with change. The PROPRIETOR RINGS UP the sale. Andy tries to act as though he fit into this taciturn Yankee environment. Something about him doesn't quite fit. His heart rate is probably too fast for Bradford. He looks a little nervous, tries to hide it. The change CLANGS out onto the counter as Andy counts out his payment. The intrigued Old Timer just watches, eventually turns to his friends.

OLD TIMER
Nickles and dimes.

SECOND OLD TIMER
(glancing over)
A-yup.

They find something else interesting to look at: the snowplow drives through Main Street.

ANDY
(to Proprietor)
Pretty nice town...

PROPRIETOR
We like it.

ANDY
(trying to make conversation)
I love the snow.

PROPRIETOR
I hate the damn stuff.

ANDY
(losing a cultural war)
Well, it's sure no fun to shovel.

PROPRIETOR
Nope.

Andy waits for what seems like a lifetime for the Proprietor to get the last item in Andy's shopping bag. Finally...

PROPRIETOR (CONT'D)
You have a nice day.

Andy starts out with his bag.

ANDY
You, too.

PROPRIETOR
Don't f'get your change...

Andy stops, looks back at the counter. He has left a pile of nickels and dimes by the cash register. He self-consciously endures the looks of the Old Timers as he walks the thousand miles back to the cash register. He scoops up his money.

ANDY
Thanks.

PROPRIETOR
(forgetting he just said
this)
You have a nice day.

Andy beats it out of there.

OLD TIMER
(regarding Andy)
Odd fella.

SECOND OLD TIMER
He's civil enough.

OLD TIMER
A-yeah, but he's odd.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Andy sits at a table, an open book before him. Charlie stands grumbling about the boys' jockey shorts she's just tried on.

CHARLIE
... How do you expect me to wear these?

ANDY

Just like that's fine.

CHARLIE

You know how dumb I look in these?

ANDY

Hey, this is rugged country.
Give me nine times six.

CHARLIE

I'd like to see you in a bra.

ANDY

I don't want them to know there's
a little girl here. What's nine
times six?

CHARLIE

Ah... fifty... fifty... four?

ANDY

Seven times four?

EXT. CABIN PORCH - DUSK

Andy approaches with a freshly cut pine tree.

INT. CABIN - DUSK

He struggles to get the tree inside. It practically pops in,
with enough tugging, knocking a lamp off a corner table.
Charlie sits smugly by, shaking her head.

ANDY

(good-naturedly)
Humbug.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The two of them are trimming the tree. Bits of colored string.
Pine cones. Christmas carols play from the portable RADIO. Andy
has a glass of wine in his hand and is more than a bit tipsy.

ANDY

Present time.

Andy hands Charlie one of the two gifts from under the tree. She
opens it. It is a modest, home-made necklace. She is touched.

CHARLIE

Awwwww...

He helps her put it on. She hands him the other gift.

CHARLIE

Yours.

He unwraps it. The pair of boys' jockey shorts. She giggles. He joins her. He throws down the shorts, grabs for her. She loves being chased, lets him catch her, and he throws her onto the couch, tickles her relentlessly, Charlie laughing until it hurts. The Christmas Carols continue on the radio.

LATER - NEAR THE FIREPLACE - NIGHT

Andy sits on the couch, writing a letter. Charlie watches him from the floor in front of the fireplace. No radio now.

CHARLIE

What are you doing?

ANDY

(preoccupied)

Writing.

CHARLIE

(sarcastically)

Duh! I never woulda guessed!

ANDY

(looking up)

I'm writing to Irv Manders. I want them to know we're okay.

(pause)

Then I'm going to start writing down everything that's happened to us, so we can let people know what's going on.

(pause)

We get public opinion on our side, they'll have to leave us alone.

CHARLIE

(afraid)

Don't tell anybody where we are.

ANDY

Don't worry, kiddo. I've already thought of that.

EXT. BRADFORD - VILLAGE CENTER

Andy hands the same envelope he had been working with in the previous scene to the UPS DRIVER. He's ready to pay the man.

UPS DRIVER

Why'n't ya just drop it in the box?

ANDY

Well, it's a little joke. I want my friends to think I'm in Boston so when they show up up here next week, I can surprise 'em. Tenth anniversary.

UPS DRIVER

(reading return address)

John Smith, hunh?

(declining Andy's change)

Keep your money. I go right by a mailbox when I get to Boston.

(pockets the envelope)

No sweat.

As Andy thanks the driver, CAMERA PULLS BACK through the INTERIOR of the general store, through the Old Timers, who sit around the stove, watching the exchange take place. One of them, the most curious, squints a little closer as the Truck PULLS AWAY and Andy picks up his shopping bag and heads away from the store.

OLD TIMER

(puffing on his pipe)

There he goes again.

He continues to watch until Andy is gone.

EXT. FOREST - ANOTHER DAY

Snow is falling. Andy and Charlie have selected a candidate tree for firewood. Charlie sits safely out of the way as she watches Andy try to wield an axe to bring the tree down. He isn't very good.

CHARLIE

(after a while)

Is that hard?

ANDY

(sweaty and tired)

You wanna try?

CHARLIE

No way!

Andy continues to chop. The tree begins to give way.

CHARLIE

Tim-ber!

But the tree isn't quite ready to fall.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Well... almost timber.

Andy just looks at her with a smirk.

CLOSER TO CABIN

Andy has split enough firewood to create a sizeable pile. Charlie builds a snowman about thirty feet away. As Andy works, Charlie talks.

CHARLIE
I wish we could have sent the
Manders a Christmas present...

ANDY
You know we can't use the mail.

CHARLIE
Is that why they don't write back?

Andy stops chopping, leans on his axe.

ANDY
I asked Irv in my letter to let us
know when it's safe by taking out
a little ad in the Boston Globe.
(resumes chopping)
That's why I keep buying the paper
every week.
(unaware of the attack)
We have a little code we're using.
He's gonna say something like...

At first, Andy doesn't notice Charlie straighten up when she is hit. It takes a second to notice the GURGLING from her throat. Andy turns to her, and Charlie reaches out for him. A confused, terrified little face. A thin trickle of blood drips from a small needle in her neck.

Andy runs toward her as she begins to stumble, but before he can reach her...

PHHHHIT! He looks down. Another needle has pierced his thigh. He screams out. Charlie falls.

ANDY
Where are you bastards?!

His knees buckle. He falls. He is out. The forest is silent.

A moment later, TWO FIGURES step out from behind trees. They carry special, odd-looking rifles.

They are faceless behind black opaque goggles and formless in their fireproof suits. They look like invaders from another planet, except for the red, white, and blue striped logos on their sleeves.

A moment later, THREE MORE step out from a different angle in the forest. Then TWO OTHERS. In all, a DOZEN people had Andy and Charlie surrounded. Eleven of them keep their distance as ONE FIGURE walks alone, directly to the fallen child, passing the collapsed father.

CLOSE ON SUITED FIGURE

It kneels down by the fallen girl, gingerly examines her, then stands. The face mask is raised to REVEAL DOCTOR HELEN RAHV.

RAHV
(to the others)
Come on. It's safe.

The others approach with the utmost caution. They come too slowly.

RAHV (CONT'D)
Don't worry. They're harmless.

A stark and snowy tableau. The snow continues to fall.

SLOWLY FADE TO WHITE

SUPERIMPOSE:

THREE MONTHS LATER

FADE IN FROM WHITE:

INT. D.S.I. COMPOUND - CHARLIE'S QUARTERS - DAY

The habitat is well appointed with "things": a large television and stereo wall unit, a doll's house, various dolls, stuffed animals; it is Architectural Digest's version of a child's condo.

What is most unusual about her room is that a large one-way mirror panels an entire wall, disguised by a child-sized barre, suitable for ballet exercises. Television cameras and microphones provide surveillance of the whole area. They are not obtrusive.

Charlie sits alone on her bed. She wears a blue Capezio leotard. She is lovely, but sad. On a nearby table sits an untouched tray offering a hamburger, french fries, and a green salad. Her glass of milk and melting Creamsicle are also untouched. Her STEREO is playing Pete Seeger, singing MISTER RABBIT. As he sings, CAMERA roams the room, finally PENETRATING the mirror, to reveal SCIENTISTS observing from an adjacent room.

Among the scientists sit Cap and Rahv. The room is full of television monitors, various biological monitors, temperature gauges, and a bank of industrial heavy duty air conditioners, presently turned off. Asbestos suits hang on the wall behind the observers.

Once this room and its occupants are established, we return to the lone little girl.

SEEGER (VOICE)

(on record)

Mister Rabbit, Mister Rabbit,
What do you eat?
Carrots and cabbages from my head
to my feet.
Every little soul's gonna shine, shine.
Every little soul's gonna shine along.

Charlie's heart isn't in the music. A Banjo accompanies the voice.

SEEGER (CONT'D)

Mister Rabbit, Mister Rabbit,
Your ears are so long.
Yes, don't you know they were put
on wrong.
Every little soul's gonna---
(record skips)
-- put on wrong. Every little soul's
gonna---
-- put on wrong. Every little soul's
gonna---

This continues for a disturbingly long time. Charlie makes no reaction at all to the break in the record. She simply languishes on her bed.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Cap gets up quickly as the BROKEN RECORD continues to irritate everyone but Charlie. She can be seen from several angles on several monitors. Rahv touches Cap's arm as he pulls on an asbestos suit.

RAHV

Careful.

He exits, the broken record continuing.

CHARLIE'S QUARTERS

She barely reacts to the sound of her pressure-locked door being opened and the sight of the asbestos-suited Cap coming toward her. He walks directly to the stereo, removes the needle from the record. Silence. He walks to Charlie, sits beside her.

CAP
(pleasantly)
Didn't that bother you?

CHARLIE
What do you care?

CAP
(eating a french fry)
Your food's getting cold.

CHARLIE
Why don't you eat it, piggy?

OBSERVATION ROOM

Rahv hides her amusement at Charlie's domination of Cap. She watches Cap respond on a monitor, as well as through the mirror.

CAP
Did you ever hear the saying
"sticks and stones will break
my bones, but names will never
hurt me?"

CHARLIE
No. How does it go?

CHARLIE'S QUARTERS

Cap doesn't like the child's sarcasm. He remains polite, however.

CAP
Some people here don't think
you can really make fires.

CHARLIE
So...?

CAP
(looks at waste basket)
Let's see you light up that waste
basket.

CHARLIE
Take off your suit and I'll light
something up for you. You.

Cap just stares at her. He is angry, and he has trouble hiding it.

CAP
You know, Charlene, we can't help
you unless you cooperate. Your
father's cooperating with us.

Charlie is stung by the thought, doesn't believe it for a moment.

CAP (CONT'D)

He doesn't understand why you're not cooperating, too. He thinks maybe you don't love him.

CHARLIE

(eyes welling with tears)
Liar.

CAP

I want to help you.

Charlie angrily tosses her tray of food across the highly polished floor. Cap pauses, then reaches for a decorator phone, picks it up.

CAP (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Get somebody from housekeeping down to D-3... with a mop.

He hangs up.

OBSERVATION ROOM

A SCIENTIST leans over to Rahv.

SCIENTIST

I think she'd respond better to a woman.

(pause)

And she doesn't know you yet.

Rahv is deep in thought. She doesn't respond. A BUZZ is heard.

CHARLIE'S QUARTERS

The BUZZ continues, followed by an INTERCOM VOICE.

INTERCOM VOICE (O.S.)

Housekeeping.

Cap walks to the door, opens it. A HOUSEKEEPER enters, dressed in an asbestos suit, carrying a mop and pail, as well as other cleaning items. The Housekeeper says nothing, simply cleans up.

CAP

(to Charlie)

You're going to be hungry tonight.

He exits. Charlie glowers at the Housekeeper. CAMERA PENETRATES the Mirror, moves in on Rahv. She is getting an inspiration.

INT. ANDY'S QUARTERS D.S.I. COMPOUND - DAY

Rev. Ernest Angley's birdlike form, saccharine smile, and hermaphroditic voice are on the tube. CLICK.

Andy changes the channel. He lies in bed, a good 25 pounds heavier. The T.V. clicker in one hand and a beer in the other. He clicks again. Smiles. T.V. Cameras have also been installed to watch his every move. His one-way mirror is smaller, designed to look like a dressing mirror.

"Elvis, the Man and the Myth" is on. A bloated, red-faced Elvis leans into a song for a Vegas audience.

A LOUD BUZZ interrupts "the King's" version of MY WAY.

A YOUNG MAN in a LAB COAT brings Andy a pitcher of water and medicine on a tray. He wears goggles.

ANDY
(looking at Elvis,
eyes glazed)
You're fifteen seconds late, shithead.

LAB COAT
(sarcastic)
Pardon me, Sir.

Andy reaches for the medicine and swigs it down with a beer. He toasts the electric eye embedded in the wall.

LAB COAT (CONT'D)
Shouldn't that be taken with water?

ANDY
(hoisting his beer, as if
on television)
Life got tougher. We got stronger.
Don't you watch T.V.?
(to the electric eye)
You watch T.V., right?!

Andy grabs his crotch for the benefit of whoever is watching him.

CAMERA PENETRATES Andy's one-way mirror to REVEAL QUINCEY watching Andy, taking notes. He is accompanied by a TECHNICIAN. On their television monitors, the Lab Coat is about to exit, when Andy asks,

ANDY
(on television monitor)
What's for dinner, shithead?

QUINCEY
We're going to have to increase
his thorazine if he stays like this.

INT. CHARLIE'S QUARTERS - DAY

It is morning. Charlie is still in bed, in her pajamas. She is reading Beatrix Potter's TALES OF PETER RABBIT. All is silent. The turning of a page is the loudest noise.

Suddenly, a LOUD BUZZ startles Charlie.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(over intercom)
Housekeeping.
(pause)
May I come in?

Charlie finds the politeness unusual. She doesn't say anything. She just waits for the door to open, but it doesn't. After a moment, another LOUD BUZZ.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
(over intercom)
Anybody in there?

CHARLIE
(irritated)
Yeah.

The pressure-locked door OPENS, and a Cleaning Lady enters. She is not wearing an asbestos suit. It is HELEN RAHV. She carries a few implements. Charlie does a doubletake, says nothing. Rahv, looking nothing like a scientist, begins quietly dusting. Charlie just watches her.

OBSERVATION ROOM

The observers, including Cap, look tense and worried.

SCIENTIST
She could fry.

CAP
(nervous)
I know.

CHARLIE'S QUARTERS

Rahv reaches the doll house.

RAHV
(exclaiming to herself)
Oh, my! What a beautiful doll house!

Charlie just looks at her as though she's weird.

Rahv dusts closer to Charlie.

CHARLIE
(unable to contain it
any longer)
Where's your suit?

RAHV
(playing ignorant)
Suit?

CHARLIE
Everybody wears a suit in here.

RAHV
(still dusting)
Oh, well... I'm new. Maybe you
have to be here a while to get one.

Rahv keeps working. She makes no further effort to engage Charlie in conversation. Charlie finds the woman interesting, amusing. But she won't let her guard down. A long silence as Rahv works.

CHARLIE
(finally)
They should give you a suit.

Rahv picks up Charlie's supper dishes from last night, starts to leave, remembers something.

RAHV
Oh...

She "surreptitiously" gives Charlie two foil-wrapped Hersey's kisses.

RAHV (CONT'D)
I snitched 'em. Bye.

Charlie stares after the new Housekeeper, watching her exit. After a moment, Charlie opens a kiss, pops it in her mouth.

OUTSIDE CHARLIE'S DOOR

Rahv leans against the door, pale with the thought of what might have happened to her in there, but elated with the breakthrough. Cap and Others come around the corner.

CAP
You all right?

Rahv nods silently, smiles slightly.

INT. LAB D.S.I. COMPOUND - DAY

CLOSE ON a pitcher of water, a fountain pen, and a grape Kool-Aid package being poured into a bottle labelled INK.

ANDY (O.S.)
What's in it for me?

ANDY AND LAB TECHNICIAN

The Technician is setting up the "Ink Experiment". He wears black opaque goggles. Andy's speech is slightly slurred, from the drugs.

TECHNICIAN
You've expressed a desire to see
your daughter.

ANDY
I don't think I can do it any more.

TECHNICIAN
She's a darling little girl.

ANDY
(defeated)
I'll try. Don't hold your breath...

A MIDDLE AGED MAN

sits at a table with Andy. Andy pours him a glass of water from the pitcher next to the bottle labelled INK.

MAN
Thanks. This test makes me nervous.
They didn't tell me nothing.

ANDY
No need to be nervous.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Quincey looks on intently, pen poised for noting observations.

TEST ROOM

ANDY
Why don't you have some ink in your
water? Put some ink in your water.

MAN
(putting glass down)
Put ink in my water. You must be
crazy.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Quincey slams down his pen.

QUINCEY
(to anyone nearby)
That bastard's faking!

INT. D.S.I. WEIGHT ROOM

Cap, Rahv, and Quincey are discussing policy, each dressed in official U.S. Government specification gym suits with American flag logos. Quincey, doing sit-ups, continually disappears from frame, only to reappear seconds later. Each time, he is a bit more winded. Rahv sits pedaling an exercycle, working up a sweat. Cap lies on the bench of a Universal weight machine. He is smoking a cigar, whose ashes occasionally fall onto his sweatshirt. During the scene, Cap never does lift the weights. He struggles at one setting for a moment, moves the pin to the next lighter weight, struggles with that for a moment, moves the pin upward. He is not the epitome of fitness.

CAP
(grunting under weights)
You went to school with him.

QUINCEY
(into frame, irritated)
I know.

CAP
I think it's time you let him know you're here. Maybe that'll get a rise out of him.

RAHV
(straining)
Cap's right.

Cap changes weight settings on the machine, tries again, to no avail.

QUINCEY
(in and out of frame)
I can't do that.

RAHV
Why not?

CAP
Are you ashamed of your position here?

This causes Quincey to stop his sit-ups. He is annoyed at the accusation. Rahv keeps cycling. Cap keeps changing weights, brushing off cigar ashes.

QUINCEY

No!

(pause)

It would blow his mind. And his mind is what we're trying to harness.

CAP

(grunting)

Maybe he's right.

(changes weight)

If we don't get results soon, we're going to have to begin vivisection. We're not learning a damn thing playing footsie with those two.

This announcement causes Rahv to stop cycling. She is still breathing hard.

RAHV

I'm making progress with the girl.

CAP

We need results now. The Pentagon is getting impatient, and I don't blame them.

Quincey gets up, grabs a towel, dries the sweat off his face, throws the towel around his shoulders.

QUINCEY

Autopsies aren't going to show us half what we'd learn if we could get them to cooperate.

CAP

(changing weights)

Well, force hasn't worked. Neither has cajoling.

(grunting, stopping)

We need results this week... or I'm pulling the plug.

Quincey, disturbed, just shakes his head. He exits. Cap calls after him.

CAP (CONT'D)

This week...!

Rahv gets off her cycle, walks over to the weight machine, looks sympathetically to Cap, who tries one last lift. No good. She takes the cigar from his mouth, leans over, kisses him deeply on the lips. They pull apart.

RAHV

You'll get your results.

INT. CHARLIE'S QUARTERS

The BUZZER sounds. Charlie looks up from her coloring book.

RAHV'S VOICE
(on intercom)
Housekeeping.

Charlie is pleased to recognize the voice. The pressure-locked door OPENS, Rahv enters, carrying her asbestos suit.

RAHV (CONT'D)
(cheerily)
Look what they gave me!

Charlie is amused that her housekeeper has been issued a suit, but isn't wearing it.

RAHV (CONT'D)
(tossing it down on a chair)
I think it looks silly.

Rahv starts cleaning. Charlie just looks on in silence. After a long pause, Charlie speaks up.

CHARLIE
Do you do all the rooms?

RAHV
(working, not looking)
Some days it feels like I do everything around here.

CHARLIE
Do you have a Mister Andrew McGee?

RAHV
(not even looking up)
Very nice fella. Always offers me a drink of soda. Not many people are that generous, y'know.

Charlie's eyes widen. She hurries over to Rahv, wants to say something, trembles in anticipation.

RAHV (CONT'D)
What's the matter, dear?

CHARLIE
He's my Daddy.

RAHV
Well, you have a real nice Daddy. No wonder you're such a nice little girl.

CHARLIE

(stammering)

Can you... can you... they won't
let me see him.

RAHV

Well... that's just terrible. I'd
complain about that if I were you.

CHARLIE

I... I try. Would you... would you
tell him... tell him I'm here...?

RAHV

(matter-of-factly)

Easy as pie.

Charlie's eyes fill with tears. Rahv puts her arms around the little girl. Charlie breaks. She sobs loudly. Rahv pats her head gently.

RAHV (CONT'D)

Don't say a word about this to
anyone. I could get in trouble.

Charlie nods her head, continues crying, holds even tighter to her new ally, who, for just an instant, seems genuinely sympathetic. We can't be sure.

INT. ANDY'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Andy, in boxer shorts, paces around the room. The place is a pit, littered with discarded socks, underwear, beer cans, and Playboy, Penthouse and New Yorker magazines. His television set BLARES out several commercials in a row: one for inexpensive legal aid, one for a woman's cosmetic cream, another for a rugged four-wheel-drive vehicle.

Andy looks at a digital clock on his VCR. 8:15 P.M. He eyes an obvious electronic peep-hole and storms over to it.

ANDY

(into peep-hole)

Where the fuck is my eight-o'clock
goddamn little blue and white mother
fucking capsule, you lazy bastards?

He throws a magazine.

ANDY (CONT'D)

You guys getting tired of jerking off
watching me jerk off, or what?

He makes an obscene gesture.

ANDY (CONT'D)
I want my medicine, and I want it now!

POV OBSERVATION ROOM - INFRARED CAMERA

ANDY
(continuing, on monitor)
Please.

The Lab Coat technician watches him for a moment, gets up and fetches Andy's medicine tray.

LAB COAT
(addressing monitor)
You make me sick, Pill Head.

Andy continues to stare into the peep-hole, deaf to his captor's sentiments. He has all the appearances of suffering addiction.

INT. LAB D.S.I. - DAY

A goggled Technician leashes a beagle to a chair. Andy, looking better now, thanks to receipt of his dose, looks on. Another goggled Technician stands in the corner.

ANDY
What do you expect me to make it do?

TECHNICIAN
Sleep.

ANDY
Ridiculous, even if I spoke Beaglese...
I've lost it.

TECHNICIAN
Just try.

Andy watches as the beagle wets the leg of the chair.

ANDY
I had nothing to do with that.

The Other Technician approaches the puddle with a mop.

INT. CHARLIE'S QUARTERS

Charlie is helping Rahv clean the windows.

CHARLIE
What else did he say?

RAHV
(under her breath)
Well... we didn't have much time.
He did say for you not to let
them push you around.

CHARLIE
That sounds like Daddy.

RAHV
(still working)
He also said not to do any fires
for them unless they promise you
in writing that you two can be
together again.

Charlie stops working, her mind racing. Rahv keeps cleaning.

CHARLIE
Helen...?

RAHV
Mmm?

CHARLIE
Do you think they'll let me see
him?

RAHV
If you get it in writing? Sure.

CHARLIE
Will you tell me the words...
like my Dad says?

RAHV
(after torturous hesitation)
Well... okay. But don't tell anybody
I did.

Charlie throws her arms around Rahv.

CHARLIE
Oh... I love you!

Rahv has no choice but to comfort the girl.

INT. LARGE ELONGATED ROOM - DAY

The room is being readied for a test of Charlie.
GOVERNMENT LABORERS do all the work.

VARIOUS ANGLES:

Heavy gauge, tempered sheet steel is hammered to the walls and ceiling.

Video cameras are set in place.

An enormous cinder block is set at the far end of the room.

A huge tank of water is being filled next to it.

Outside the room, in the observation area, a computer terminal and monitoring equipment are being installed.

INT. TEST ROOM AND OBSERVATION ROOM - INTERCUT - DAY

Charlie stands at one end of the test room, alone. Wires abound from her skull, arms and neck. Men wheel in gigantic blocks of ICE, and then leave.

Cap, Rahv, Quincey, and a horde of Technicians are joined by several Military Observers, in uniform. They are ready to begin. Cap speaks through an intercom.

CAP

Okay, Charlie. And try not to hold back too much.

Charlie looks to the cinder block. She is not completely at ease about this yet.

The instrumentation is all set and humming nicely.

All eyes go to the monitors. Multiple images of Charlie suddenly turn in confusion. She looks like she's going to cry.

Cap grows embarrassed.

CAP

(to Rahv)

What's wrong with her?

RAHV

She's afraid.

CAP

Dammit, I thought you took care of this.

MILITARY OBSERVER

What seems to be the problem, Hollister?

Charlie sits alone in the long, strange room.

The reinforced door opens. Cap comes in.

CAP
Are you ready?

CHARLIE
You said I could see my Daddy.

CAP
(forcing a smile)
After.

CHARLIE
I want him around.

CAP
Well, that's impossible. He's...
busy.

INT. ANDY'S QUARTERS

He lies on his bed, television set blaring. The Reverend Ernest Angley is pontificating about "taking control of one's life". Lab Coat delivers Andy's medication on a tray.

ANDY
Thank you, Jeeves.

INT. TEST SITE

Several Scientists are gathered around Charlie now. Rahv is, of course, hidden away in the observation room. Charlie looks defiant.

CAP
(losing his patience)
Give me that file.
(receiving a dossier)
All right, Charlene. It's time
you learned just who is on your
side and who isn't.

Cap reaches into the dossier, pulls out a newspaper headline. It is the one Andy saw in Cleveland: PROFESSOR SOUGHT IN WIFE'S SLAYING - FEAR CHILD KIDNAPPED. Charlie stares at the words, stares at the photos of herself and her father.

CHARLIE
No!!!

Shimmering heat builds up around the little girl. Nervous adults struggle to get out of the room. Cap is trapped for a moment. His hair begins to smolder. He SLAMS the door on Charlie.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

That's a lie!

She SCREAMS in rage, and the room goes.

VARIOUS ANGLES - INTERCUT BETWEEN TEST ROOM & OBERVATION ROOM

The cinder block begins to smoke. Mortar and concrete jump upward like popcorn.

The gigantic blocks of ice begin melting in a rush.

RAHV

Kelvinators!

A hand pulls a switch on the console. The forty industrial size air conditioners within the test room rumble on.

The red digital temperature readout on the teleprompter climbs quickly from 350-375 ...410...525 ... 630...695 ... 700...

The mortar holding the cinder blocks together begins to run like molasses. The blocks glow blue and yellow.

The T.V. cameras explode. The air conditioners melt, then explode. The sheet metal steel walls buckle.

The monitoring equipment is going wild. Panic on the faces of the observers, especially the military men, who didn't quite believe the reports... until now. It is all happening too fast. The digital temperature readout is a blur.

Horror passes over Rahv's face as she watches Charlie through the melting glass of the observation window. The young girl's eyes close in a dreamy reverie. She smiles and swoons in ecstasy.

The cinder blocks crumble and then EXPLODE. Hysteria by the terminal.

CAP

(trying intercom)

Cut it, Charlie! Stop it!

But the speakers in the next room have exploded.

The sheet metal begins to tear from the wall. The water tank steams. The heat begins to rush toward the tank until it glows red hot, then EXPLODES.

INT. ANDY'S QUARTERS

The EXPLOSION rocks the compound. Andy hears and feels it. He has his pills in one hand, his beer in the other, and he is about to take the medication when the tremor hits. A distant SIREN sounds.

OBSERVATION ROOM - OUTSIDE ANDY'S QUARTERS

Lab Coat runs out of the room to see what happened. Andy's image on the unobserved monitors turns head on to the surveillance camera.

ANDY
(proudly)
That's my kid...!

ANDY'S ROOM

Andy, jolted from his drunk and drugged stupor, looks to the television, just as the good Reverent Angley concludes his long-winded delivery.

REVEREND ANGLEY
(on television)
Brothers and Sister... This is the
First Day of the Rest of Your Lives.
What are you going to do for the...

Andy CLICKS off the television set. He continues to stare at it. He looks down at the pill he is about to take, hesitates, drops it into his beer, and tosses the beer can across the room. He walks to the mirror.

TEST SITE

Asbestos-suited GOVERNMENT TROOPS escort a dazed Charlie out of the glowing rubble. Cap leads the way. Everyone is silent, still in shock. Firefighters are on the scene.

ANDY'S ROOM

He sits directly before the mirror. He is staring himself down. He looks frightened. Sirens still sound in the background.

ANDY
(to his mirror image)
Okay... ready for this?

Andy pushes. He strains. His pupils dilate. The whites of his eyes undergo a transformation. They become bloodshot. An eye droops. Andy is suffering a more intense agony than he has yet experienced. But just as the background SOUND EFFECTS take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY, Andy pitches back in his chair, collapsing on the floor. He lies there, motionless, for a long moment.

INT. CAP'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cap lives in a rather expensive, rather old-fashioned Victorian home. The lighting is subdued. He sits in bed, propped against an oversized pillow. He wears pajamas. He is deep in thought.

A woman's face is nuzzled against his midriff. We see only her hair at first, but when she raises her head to speak, we recognize her.

RAHV

What are you thinking?

CAP

About that little girl.

(pause)

She looked so afraid.

(pause)

We've created a monster, Helen.

RAHV

It'll be all right.

Cap looks at Rahv as though she's crazy.

CAP

That girl is Ground Zero wherever she goes... and you say 'it'll be all right'?

RAHV

We're learning a lot.

CAP

The girl is rapidly developing the ability to crack the planet like a china plate in a shooting gallery, and you say 'it'll be all right' and 'we're learning a lot'. That's beautiful, Helen. That's really positive thinking.

RAHV

Well, what are you thinking?

CAP

We have to stop her from ever doing that again.

RAHV

Cap, we just weren't prepared for that. The next test will--

CAP
 (cutting her off)
 Let's not fight about this.
 (planning)
 Maybe we can turn McGee. Get
 him to help us. He seems to be
 a reasonable man.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDY'S QUARTERS - DAY

Andy is singing along with Mister Rogers on the television. He seems worse off than ever before. His level of drug-daze and inebriation is unprecedented... or perhaps this is the result of his attempt to push himself last night. His face is still distorted from the effort.

ANDY
 (singing with television)
 It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood,
 a wonderful day for a neighbor...
 Won't you be mine?
 Would you be mine?

Andy's singing is interrupted by a BUZZ at his door, but Mister Rogers continues right on.

Cap enters, wearing his goggles. Andy hardly notices him. He continues to stare at the television set, seeming to enjoy every word Mister Rogers has to say.

CAP
 Andy, we've never met. I'm
 Captain Hollister. They tell me
 I'm in charge of this here rodeo.

ANDY
 Shh. I like this part.

Cap, taken a little off guard, turns and watches the television for a moment, until it becomes too embarrassing to continue. He gets up and stands in front of the screen, blocking Andy's view.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 Aw. Who are you?

CAP
 You can call me Cap.

ANDY
 Hi, Captain. Where's Bunny Rabbit?

Cap, fighting exasperation, removes his goggles.

OBSERVATION ROOM

The Technician watching Andy's room does a double-take at Cap removing his goggles on the television monitor. He becomes more alert, looks to his phone.

ANDY
(on monitor)
Nice to see eyes again.

CAP
Let's talk, Andy. Man-to-man.
No bullshit.

ANDY
(dazed)
What about?

CAP
Your future. Charlene's future.

ANDY
Who?

CAP
Your daughter. Charlie.

ANDY
(looking lost)
Funny name for a daughter.

CAP
You do know who I'm talking about...?

Andy looks confused for a moment. Finally, he speaks, softly.

ANDY
(no longer dazed)
Look. Let's discuss this in the
other room.

As he speaks, SOUND EFFECTS take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY. These continue for an extended moment, their clarity resurging with each new push Andy achieves.

CAP
(not losing a beat)
Sure. You mean the observation
room.

OBSERVATION ROOM

The Technician is having a bird. He grabs his phone, dials fast.

ANDY
(on monitor)
Never been there. Anybody there now?

HALLWAY TO OBSERVATION ROOM

CAP

Just Harry.

Cap opens the door to the Observation Room to find Harry frantic on the phone. CAMERA FOLLOWS them in. Harry grabs some goggles.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(on other end of phone)
He's in a meeting right now.

TECHNICIAN

This is an emergency.

ANDY

Stop him.

As the WOMAN can be heard putting Harry on hold, Cap matter-of-factly pulls out his .45 and shoots the Technician with a loud KABLAM. Andy hangs up the phone just as Quincey can be HEARD.

QUINCEY

(distant phone sound)
Hello?

CLICK. Andy doesn't recognize the voice.

ANDY

What's a good spot to meet outside...
someplace we won't be seen?

CAP

I've always enjoyed the stables for
solitude. They're really quite--

ANDY

Call security. Have someone-- one
man-- deliver Charlene McGee to the
stables immediately... on your
authority.

Cap picks up the phone without question.

RAHV'S LABORATORY

Quincey ducks in, puzzled.

QUINCEY

Did you call me?

RAHV

No...?

QUINCEY

Somebody just called me. Lois said
whoever it was was really excited.
But they hung up.

RAHV
Did you try Cap?

QUINCEY
He's not around.

This alarms Rahv. She moves quickly out of the room with Quincey.

RAHV
Check the father. I'll check
the girl.

QUINCEY
What's up?

RAHV
(disappearing down another
corridor)
Just check!

STARK CORRIDOR

CAMERA FOLLOWS Cap and Andy down this long corridor. They pass many observation windows and laboratories on their way. Everything looks ultramodern and sterile. This aesthetic changes as they attain higher and higher levels, culminating eventually in their arrival on the first floor, which is Southern ante-bellum in flavor.

ANDY
(pushing Cap)
You're giving me a tour as
you would any visiting dignitary.
Don't let anything disturb us on
our way to the stables.

CAP
Very well. These rooms to your
left are part of an extensive
honeycomb complex of identical
research laboratories. Since this
is a clandestine organization within
the Central Intelligence Agency, we
are subject to funding by Acts of
Congress, although they know nothing
specific about what is here or what
goes on here. This for example, I'm
proud to say, is the first germ warfare
research lab of its kind in the world.
Established in 1938, we got a four year
jump on the Russkies. Now on your right...

Andy just follows, nervously and in pain.

ANDY'S OBSERVATION ROOM

Quincey enters to find the Technician shot through the head. He overcomes his shock and tries to make a phone call, but he finds the cord cut.

QUINCEY

Holy shit.

He runs out.

ELEVATOR

Andy is sweating as Cap drones on in his tour guide monotone.

CAP

This elevator was installed in 1976. Prior to this time, travel between floors was subject to--

CUT TO:

CHARLIE'S QUARTERS

Rahv is grilling the Observation Monitor.

RAHV

Where's the girl?

MONITOR

Stables.

RAHV

Who the hell authorized that?!

MONITOR

Cap.

RAHV

Cap?

HALLWAY

Charlie is being led down a long corridor by an asbestos-suited Technician.

TECHNICIAN

I hear you made quite a stir the other day.

CHARLIE

I guess.

TECHNICIAN

This your first time out?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

TECHNICIAN

You're lucky. It's a beautiful day.

CHARLIE

I can't wait.

UPPER LEVEL CORRIDOR

Cap and Andy step off the elevator. Several people pass and nod.

CAP

This particular floor was added for the extensive study of nerve gas in 1957. Prior to that time, it was a storage area--

ANDY

(whispering)

Think anyone'll check us?

CAP

Why should they? I'm the big cheese.

(pause)

Now this is interesting: back in World War II, MacArthur was faced with--

They reach a security desk. The YOUNG BALDING MAN reading from a book looks up.

CAP (CONT'D)

(to Andy)

Excuse me.

(to guard)

Hello, Richard. Hitting the books?

RICHARD

More like they're hitting me.

He glances at Andy curiously. Cap slips his thumb into a slot. A BUZZ is heard, followed by a green light shining on Richard's console.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Destination?

CAP
Stable. We're going to pick up
Andy's daughter and escape.

Andy quickly counters.

ANDY
(pushing)
He's only fooling. Andrews Air
Force Base.

The SOUND EFFECTS and Andy's obvious pain indicate the push has
worked.

RICHARD
Andrews Air Force Base. Have a good
day, gentlemen.

He jots it down in his book and BUZZES them through.

ANDY
(quietly, to Cap)
Will the copter be there?

CAP
Damn well better be, or I'll have
their asses.

LAST CORRIDOR FOR CHARLIE

The grandiose Southern mansion architecture is evident as the last
door is opened, REVEALING:

EXT. THE COMPOUND

For the first time, we see that the site of this secret compound
is under a beautifully landscaped pair of ante-bellum mansions
facing each other. There is a large red barn and a duck pond in
view. A Heliport is off to one side. Guard towers and a high
fence surround the area.

A helicopter is approaching the heliport.

CHARLIE
(enthralled)
It's so pretty here...!

They walk on.

D.S.I. COMPOUND CENTRAL CONTROL AREA

Rahv is fuming at the Main Switchboard. A BUSY OPERATOR finally turns to her.

RAHV

I want you to page Cap Hollister.

OPERATOR

Do you have an authorization number for this page?

RAHV

(impatient)

Just gimme the fucking microphone.

Quincey runs in, pale and winded. Without a word, he BREAKS a GLASS DOME, sounding a GENERAL ALARM. Rahv and the Operator look on with eyes widened. Quincey grabs the microphone.

QUINCEY

(on mike, and over P.A.)

Condition Bright Yellow. I say again...
Condition Bright Yellow. No drill...

EXT. STABLE

Andy and Cap approach the stable as the ALARM SOUNDS. Cap is oblivious. Andy searches for Charlie.

CAP

(still giving his tour)

This whole area was once used for breeding racehorses. Of course, back in the Civil War, it was just what it appears to be. In fact, where we're walking, cotton once grew--

Andy sees Charlie.

The Technician hears the ALARM, draws his gun, puts his arms around Charlie.

CHARLIE

(to Technician)

Don't!

ANDY

(to Cap)

Kill him.

Cap shoots the Technician in one LOUD SHOT. Tech's gun FIRES into the dirt. Charlie runs to her father.

INT./EXT. COMPOUND - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

As the ALARM SOUNDS and a NEW, MORE CALM VOICE than Quincey's takes over on the SPEAKERS, GROUNDKEEPERS turn off their mowers. Doors to important rooms slide shut and lock. Cap's SECRETARY produces a handgun from a drawer. SHOP AGENTS are dispensed weapons at the armory. The voltage on the outer fences BUZZES to its maximum. Dobermans bark and leap. Gates separating the compound from the outside slide shut and lock automatically. A truck just entering has its rear bumper torn off by a sliding gate.

CALM VOICE ON P.A.

Condition Bright Yellow. The little girl is escaping... with her father. Condition Bright Yellow. Proceed with utmost caution.

The landing copter reverses direction just before touching down, frustrating Andy's hopes for an easy getaway. He stands holding Charlie in a stable entrance. Cap, oblivious, continues his tour.

CAP

You've probably heard of Kentucky Moon... three time winner of the Preakness. This was his stable over here. Of course, we haven't had horses now for, oh, I'd say almost ten, twelve years--

ANDY

Don't let that copter get away.

Cap FIRES a warning shot at the copter.

COPTER PILOT opts to run for it, maneuvers rapidly sideways, then up. Cap FIRES again, misses.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Save it.

CHARLIE

What's going on, Daddy?

WIDE EXPANSE OF LAWN

A most bizarre image is presented against the tranquil backdrop of this southern plantation as SCORES OF ASBESTOS-SUITED, GOGGLED G-MEN emerge over a hillock, moving relentlessly toward the stables with their flame throwers and automatic rifles. Some carry man-portable missile launchers. Armageddon in the Old South.

QUINCEY

leads a small platoon of Government Men ahead of the rest. All are in suits and goggles. He sees Cap babbling to Andy and Charlie, decides to talk them out of the stable. He stands ahead of the others, unrecognizable in his protective garb.

QUINCEY

Andy, let's stop this before we're all sorry. Nobody can win a situation like this.

INT. STABLE

Cap is giving his tour as Charlie clutches a now-curious Andy. He recognizes the voice... can't place it.

CAP

(dropping into b.g.)

Notice the construction of these overhead beams. Each one was laid in by hand over two-hundred years ago by native craftsmen. All wood was taken from forests within the state... kind of a point of pride around here...

ANDY

Who is that?

QUINCEY

Cap? Will you bring them out peacefully?

CAP

Dammit, Quincey! Can't you see I'm busy?! We don't want to be disturbed. Now if you'll follow me into the south wing, I want to show you an example of--

ANDY

(to Cap)

Quincey who?

Cap is too confused to answer. He gestures that they should go into the south wing and continue their tour. Andy gives up on Cap.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(calling out of stable)

Tremont?! Quincey Tremont? Is that you?

QUINCEY

Yes, Andy. You're making a terrible mistake. We want to help you and your daughter. Why don't you just--

But Andy is furious. As Quincey pleads for rational behavior, Andy gives Cap the order.

ANDY

Shoot that bastard.

Cap FIRES his .45, the bullet tearing through Quincey's asbestos suit, fiber, flesh, and blood spraying out his back.

CAP

Damn good shooting, if I do say so.

A BARRAGE of AUTOMATIC RIFLE FIRE rips through the stable, tearing wood chips off walls, sending Andy to the deck, falling so his body shelters Charlie from the debris. Cap isn't so fortunate. He is torn apart by the gunfire. He tries to continue his tour.

CAP (CONT'D)

(dying)

Of course... some people...
objected to... the conversion...

(drops his .45)
of... these... stables...

He drops dead. Andy sees the gun, moves for it.

EXT. WIDE SHOT

Hundreds of GOVERNMENT TROOPS converge on the stables, backed by a slow but steady approaching array of armored vehicles.

RAHV

leads the contingent. She issues final orders.

RAHV

Shoot to kill the father, but we
need the girl alive.

THE CONTINGENT

encircles the stable. The alarm continues in the background.

INT. STABLE

Andy and Charlie hold tight. Both look afraid. Andy holds the .45.

RAHV (O.S.)

Charlie!

They turn, look toward the entrance.

CHARLIE
(surprised)
Helen...?

Rahv tentatively clears the doorway, cautiously stepping into sight. She wears a suit and goggles.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(to Andy)
That's Helen. She's good.

ANDY
(grasping Charlie)
No.

RAHV
They want you to come back inside,
Charlie.

CHARLIE
Is that you, Helen?

Rahv removes her head gear. She is afraid.

RAHV
Yes, darling.

ANDY
(venomous)
You.
(to Charlie)
That's the one I told you about.
The one who did the experiment
on Mommy and me.

Charlie is confused.

RAHV
Your father is a sick man. We
want to help him.

CHARLIE
(confused, to Andy)
She said "we".

ANDY
She's one of them, Charlie. She
killed your mother and she wants
to kill us.

RAHV
Charlie, you know that's not true.

Andy rises fast, fires the .45 at Rahv. It CLICKS empty. A BARRAGE of GUNFIRE RIPS through the stable once more. Andy is wounded with three shots in the arm, one grazing his head.

CHARLIE

No!! DADDY!!!

Rahv hurries into the stable, tries to grab Charlie. She is followed by other TROOPS.

But Charlie, horrified at the sight of her bloody father, resists Rahv's tugs. She becomes too hot to hold. A simmering heat rises around the little girl as she fixes her crystal clear eyes on Rahv's.

RAHV

No!

Rahv is blasted upwards, pinned to the ceiling of the stable, where she remains suspended.

Charlie looks up at her through vengeful but stoic tears.

The Government Troops have stopped abruptly from their advance, staring in disbelief at the sights before them: Rahv smoldering against the ceiling, bales of hay igniting spontaneously. A wooden beam smoking, then flaming.

RAHV (CONT'D)

(in terror)

Charlie...!

A glowing pitchfork becomes a spear and flies upward, impaling Rahv through the neck, its white hot steel setting her face ablaze.

The troops scatter, but sporadic SHOTS continue.

Charlie holds onto her father, crying. He is barely conscious.

CHARLIE

Daddy...?

OVER THE RISE

of a nearby hill, the heavy artillery arrives.

OFFICER IN CHARGE

tries to pull his men together. They have retreated a hundred yards. They are still falling back when the Officer issues his order. He looks to the smoking stables as he speaks.

OFFICER
Hold your fire!

The order is passed on by radio to all concerned.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
(to an assistant)
They won't last long in that
smoke.

All shooting subsides.

EXT. COMPOUND WINDOWS

D.S.I. office employees stare towards the fire in the stable.

EXT. STABLE

From out of what has now become a gigantic cloud of white smoke and dust, Charlie appears, propping up her father as they both make an effort to walk into fresh air. They seem unprotected, out in the open. Charlie's eyes still glisten with tears, but they have a savage, fearless quality to them.

CHARLIE
Please...!
(pause)
Nobody shoot. We don't want to
hurt you.

She makes it into the clear.

OFFICER IN CHARGE

stares at the audacity of this couple.

OFFICER
Who the fuck does she think she
is?
(pause, issuing order)
Take aim...

A WAVE OF HEAT passes through the air about them.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
(desperate)
For God's sakes, fire!!

But many of the barrels melt in the wave of heat. Those guns which don't melt or explode merely send their projectiles a few yards before they disintegrate in Charlie's newest firestorm.

CHARLIE AND ANDY

walk unharmed amidst a barrage of rifle and artillery fire, all of which melt as if expunged by some invisible shield twenty yards in front of Charlie.

OFFICER IN CHARGE

stands, looks around at his troops igniting into flames, and runs like hell the other way.

Balls of fire materialize and race across the grass after the men. Panic. They sprint in retreat.

Several are engulfed. Screaming, running torches.

The outer walls of the two ante-bellum buildings begin to glow and wretch with fire.

THE ARMORED CARAVAN

begins to explode, turrets flying off, vehicles crashing into each other, some exploding.

INT. COMPOUND

Hysteria. Fire alarms. Things catching fire.

EXT. COMPOUND

A tactical missile launcher, throttled by a laser of heat, is torn up in flames. Three MEN go flying.

A tank's reporting cannon glows red and snaps off, spinning like a propeller blade and slicing the top off a troop transport. The tank's top pops, its screaming, smoking occupants scramble out.

The last line battery of machine gunners are blown back by gale force winds of heat.

Men and machinery explode, burn, roar in agony.

The Compound doors burst open. Employees pour out, heading for the gates.

The trained guard dogs seek refuge wherever possible. None is inclined to attack anyone or anything.

Several employees are paralyzed into arcing, smoking signs that the electrical fences are still working. A runaway tank takes down a whole section of electrified fence, and many follow it out.

INT. COMPOUND

Typewriters, computers, test equipment all liquifying like tallow. Other objects spinning, flying, crashing. Walls, ceilings dripping, caving in.

Andy's television set plays its last deoderant commercial before exploding.

Charlie's toy rocking horse rears up in flame before seeming to thrash itself into disintegration.

EXT. COMPOUND

The sky is black with soot. Everything is rubble. Fires smolder everywhere. The countryside is blackened.

No one remains on the charred landscape.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION SET

The Today Show is in progress. GENE SHALLIT sits with guest ANITA BRYANT.

SHALLIT

That's fascinating, Anita.. But before we get into that, let's check with Bernard Kalb in Washington.

CUT TO:

KALB

Thank you, Gene. More on that Langley, Virginia terrorist firebombing that claimed the lives of 31 health care professionals of the Veterans' Administration.
(pause)

The F.B.I. concludes that it was a disgruntled Vietnam War Veteran, one James "Cap" Hollister, who, denied an increase in his federal pension, decided to "teach the government a lesson" ... those were his words found in a suicide note to Doctor Helen Rahv, an employee of the hospital there.

As Kalb's report continues to go into more detailed misinformation, we

CUT TO:

INT. NBC CONTROL ROOM - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

The Today Show set can be seen through the double-paned windows of the control room. A room full of TECHNICIANS works the show. Kalb continues on some monitors. Gene and Anita Bryant wait for their cue on another. Hectic.

The TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, wearing headphones, is screaming back at someone on the other end.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Who the hell says so?!
(pause to listen)
In the middle of the program?
(pause to listen)
In the middle of the news? Is
he crazy?

All heads rise to look to the set below. GRANT TINKER, Chairman of the Board of NBC, is leading a haggard man and a little girl right onto the set of The Today Show.

THE SET

Andy holds Charlie's hand as he further pushes Tinker. SOUND EFFECTS take on a BRILLIANT CLARITY as Andy's headache continues to bother him.

ANDY
(to Tinker)
Just make 'em keep us both in
the shot.

TINKER
Anything you say, Andy. I just
think it's a great idea.

Tinker leans over to a surprised Shallit. Anita Bryant smiles at Charlie. Tinker whispers something to Shallit, who listens incredulously.

SHALLIT
(shocked)
Now?!

TINKER
Yes, now.

From the window of the control room, the Technical Director gives an exaggerated "what can we do? He's the boss" kind of shrug.

Sound Men hurriedly put microphones on Andy, Charlie, and Tinker.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

(to assistant)

The F.C.C. ain't gonna like this...

(on headphones)

Ready on Three...

(taps switchman)

Taking Three.

Kalb is cut off in mid-sentence. The Camera pointing at Tinker, Andy, and Charlie lights up. Several Monitors in the Control Room switch to a picture of Gene with his new "guests".

SHALLIT

(a bit shook)

Ladies and gentlemen... we'll get back to Washington, but ah... right now, we have an important message from Mister Grant Tinker, Chairman of the Board and President of the National Broadcasting Company.

TINKER

(suavely)

Thank you, Gene. Apparently we've been lying to you, and the government's been lying to us. Here's Andy McGee to tell you what this is all about.

ANDY

Some of you may find this hard to believe. I know I did at first... until they killed Vicky...

The camera crew and stagehands can't believe what they're seeing.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION SCREEN

As Andy continues, CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK to REVEAL the Old Timers sitting around the checkerboard in the Bradford General Store. The stove isn't going, and they are no longer wearing their warmest clothing. Most of the snow outside has melted. But they look the same as ever: cranky, ornery, and spry.

ANDY

(on television)

Vicky was my wife. We met in an experiment back in college... that was in 1967. It was sponsored by an organization that we Americans pay for... but know nothing about. It's called D.S.I.

But before Andy can get much farther, one Old Timer gets up and goes to the television set.

OLD TIMER

It's that damned feller.

(pause)

I told ya he was an odd one.

The Old Timer switches the channel.

Now we have a live demonstration of a utensil which dices, slices, pares, and disassembles for cleaning in only 30 seconds. The host of a rival morning television show is doing the demonstration.

The Old Timer goes back to his chair, lights his pipe. He takes a few puffs, and the CAMERA MOVES INTO THE BOWL of his pipe, filling the screen with the alternately red-flaming and white-smoking tobacco.

As the leaves slowly burn, we SUPERIMPOSE CREDITS, then

FADE OUT

-THE END-